English Literature

Theories, Interpretations, Contexts

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Vol. 5 – December 2018

Edizioni
Ca'Foscari

English Literature
Theories, Interpretations, Contexts

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 1594-1930

General Editor
Flavio Gregori

Edizioni Ca’ Foscari - Digital Publishing
Università Ca’ Foscari Venezia
Dorsoduro 3246
30123 Venezia
http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/riviste/english-literature/

English Literature
Theories, Interpretations, Contexts

Rivista annuale | Annual Journal

Direzione e redazione | Head office
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia | Dorsoduro 3246 | 30123 Venezia, Italy | english.lit@unive.it

Editore
Edizioni Ca' Foscari – Digital Publishing | Dorsoduro 3246, 30123 Venezia, Italia | ecf@unive.it

Stampa
Logo srl, via Marco Polo 8, 35010 Bogoricco (PD)
English Literature is a journal founded by the Associazione Nazionale dei Docenti di Anglistica (ANDA).

Certificazione scientifica delle Opere pubblicate da Edizioni Ca' Foscari – Digital Publishing: tutti i saggi pubblicati hanno ottenuto il parere favorevole da parte di valutatori esperti della materia, attraverso un processo di revisione anonima sotto la responsabilità del Comitato scientifico della collana. La valutazione è stata condotta in aderenza ai criteri scientifici ed editoriali di Edizioni Ca' Foscari.
Scientific certification of the works published by Edizioni Ca' Foscari – Digital Publishing: all essays published in this volume have received a favourable opinion by subject-matter experts, through an anonymous peer review process under the responsibility of the Scientific Committee of the series. The evaluations were conducted in adherence to the scientific and editorial criteria established by Edizioni Ca' Foscari.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Table of Contents

SECTION 1. ADAPTATIONS, ESPECIALLY (BUT NOT ONLY) IN CINEMA

URL http://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni/riviste/english-literature/2018/5/
DOI http://doi.org/10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/01

SECTION 2. PASSIONS, EMOTIONS AND COGNITION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE (PART 2)

Section 1
Adaptations, Especially (but not Only) in Cinema

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

What Isn’t a Cross-Cultural Adaptation, and, If You Know That, Then What Isn’t a Cross-cultural Text?

Thomas Leitch
(University of Delaware, USA)

Abstract This essay begins by asking why the term ‘cross-cultural adaptation’ should not be extended from adaptations that cross national borders to adaptations that cross temporal, historical, linguistic, medial, and gendered borders. Unlike some theorists who have attempted to define away the problems that arise when the term ‘cross-cultural adaptation’ is extended so broadly that it courts ambiguity, circularity, and redundancy by referring instead to ‘transnational adaptation’, the essay takes those problems as its subject. It suggests that adaptations police and valorize the cultural borders they cross by performing them as borders and the cultures they demarcate as cultures. Since cultures and the borders between them cannot be described without performing them, the essay concludes that the term ‘cross-cultural adaptation’ is as defensible as any other for describing – that is, for performing – the cultural work that adaptations do.

Keywords Adaptation. Cross-cultural. Heteroglossia. Monoglossia. Performance.

My title pays homage to Richard Poirier’s landmark essay “What Is English Studies, and If You Know What That Is, What Is English Literature?” (Poirier 1971). But my more immediate inspiration is a preview my student Naghmeh Rezaie gave last spring of the paper she presented at the 2018 Literature Film Association conference on cross-cultural adaptations of *White Nights*, Fyodor Dostoevsky’s 1848 story of an anonymous narrator’s unrequited and ultimately hopeless love for Nastenka, a young woman whom he rescues from harassment. Nastenka cannot get over her own attachment to her grandmother’s former lodger, a man who refused to marry her before he left St. Petersburg for Moscow but promised to return a year later. After a series of meetings that take place over four long summer evenings (the white nights of the title), the end of the story finds Nastenka abandoning the narrator to embrace the unexpectedly returning lodger and the pathologically shy and lonely narrator, who wonders if anyone will ever love him but refuses to blame the woman who brought even such fleeting happiness to his life. Not counting *White Nights*, Taylor Hackford’s 1985 film about a defecting Soviet dancer who finds himself held against his will in his homeland, the story has been adapted to the cinema at least thirteen

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/001
Submitted: 2018-11-10 | Accepted: 2018-12-13

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

times: as *Le notti bianchi* (1957) directed by Luchino Visconti; *Belye nochi* (1959), a Soviet film directed by Ivan Pyryev; *Chhalia* (1960), an Indian film directed by Manmohan Desai; *Quatre nuits d'un reveur* (1971), directed by Robert Bresson; *Shabhaye Roshan* (2003), an Iranian film directed by Farzad Motamen; three Indian films: *Iyarkai* (2003), directed by S.P. Jananathan, *Ahista Ahista* (2006), by Shivan Nair, and *Saawariya* (2007) by Sanjay Leela Bhansali; *Two Lovers* (2008), an American film directed by James Gray; *Nuits blanches sur la jetée* (2014), a French film directed by Paul Vecchiali; *Velutha Rathrikal* (2015), another Indian film directed by Razi Muhammed; *Belye Nochi* (2017), a Russian remake directed by Tatyana Voronetskaya and Andrey Bogatyrov; and *Prometo no enamorarme* (2018), a Mexican film directed by Alejandro Sugich.

The adaptability of *White Nights* to so many foreign cinemas and cultures raises several urgent questions for Rezaie and other like-minded researchers. Why has it been able to cross so many national and cultural borders? Why has it been particularly attractive to Indian filmmakers, who so far have produced five adaptations of it? What is involved in translating Dostoevsky's very Russian story, rooted in the mores and even the seasonal rhythms of St. Petersburg, for audiences in other cultures? Instead of pursuing any of these perfectly reasonable questions, I wish to interrogate the very notion of cross-cultural adaptation by hypothetically expanding its remit to include adaptations that cover a much wider array of cultures and crossings than the ones between a national literature and a foreign cinema. If cross-cultural adaptations are defined in contrast with monocultural adaptations, I would argue, then we need to look more closely and critically at this definition, because there is no such thing as any monocultural adaptations for them to be contrasted with.

If we agree that Visconti's and Bresson's films based on *White Nights* are cross-cultural adaptations, there is no good reason why we should not call *Belye nochi*, Pyryev's Soviet film adaptation also known as *White Nights*, a cross-cultural adaptation as well. Although the Wikipedia entry on *White Nights*[1] describes *Belye nochi* as "a Russian film", the Wikipedia entry on Pyryev identifies him more precisely as "the high priest of Stalinist cinema", a six-time winner of the Stalin Prize who served for three years as the director of the Mosfilm studios, a director who, for the two decades leading up to *Belye nochi*, was "the most influential man in the Soviet motion picture industry".[2] Soviet, not Russian: by the time Pyryev made his three highly regarded Dostoevsky adaptations, *The Idiot* (1958), *White Nights* (1959), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1969), Russia had long since become a part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a culture

1 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Nights_(short_story) (2018-11-08).

2 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Pyryev (2018-11-08).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

quite Russian in some ways but quite remote from Dostoevsky's Russia in others. And if *Belye nochi* is a cross-cultural adaptation that attempts to translate Dostoevsky's very Russian story into terms palatable to Soviet audiences and censors, then it is clearly a stellar example of Alexander Burry's observation in the Introduction to his coedited collection *Border Crossing* that

> when a Russian literary text, with all of its embedded cultural meanings, is transported to another country or time or both, these meanings are foreign and must be redefined to correspond with the new spatial and temporal territories. In this process of redefinition, new cultural realities will transform those original semantic meanings. (Burry 2016, 7)

If a text's meanings become "foreign" and in need of reculturating whenever that text is "transported to another country or time or both", then any adaptation produced in an historical period later than that of its adapted text, whether it updates the particulars of that text or presents itself as a costume drama, a genre with its own specific conventions often remote from those of the texts it reframes, is a cross-cultural adaptation even if the borders it crosses are temporal, historical, and generic rather than spatial and national.

Following this line of reasoning, any film adaptation of Dostoevsky – or any nineteenth-century writer – is necessarily a cross-cultural adaptation in at least two ways. In adapting his nineteenth-century fiction for twentieth- and twenty-first-century audiences, it crosses temporal borders between what those audiences would consider old and new cultures. And in adapting a well-known literary text to the screen, it seeks to rework a treasured product of literary culture to suit the very different expectations and affordances of cinema culture. Every adaptation ever made, from the pirated stage plays that drove Charles Dickens to righteous indignation to the latest cinematic offspring of the Marvel and D.C. Comics Universes, crosses some kinds of cultural borders in order to reach new audiences by presenting familiar material in new ways. If it did not, there would be no point in producing adaptations at all. So it seems fair to conclude that in a fundamental sense, every adaptation is a cross-cultural adaptation, including adaptations like the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice* television miniseries that critics have categorised as conservative heritage adaptations in contrast with more avowedly cross-cultural adaptations like *Clueless*, the Beverly Hills update of *Emma* that Amy Heckerling directed that same year.

It might seem that the most immediate danger of this position, that such a wholesale broadening of the category would render the term 'cross-cultural adaptation' so vague as to be tautological and therefore useless for practical criticism, could be avoided if we substituted a term like 'transna-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

tional' adaptation, which theorists like Robert Iain Smith and Constantine Verevis prefer because it is more specific and better-armed against the kind of all-encompassing redefinition I have described, for 'cross-cultural' adaptation, which Andrew Horton and Stuart Y. McDougal use (Smith, Verevis 2017, 2; Horton, McDougal 1998, 4). Despite its greater specificity, however, I am far from convinced that 'transnational adaptation' does indeed avoid the pitfalls of 'cross-cultural adaptation'. The case of *Belye Nochi* seems equally problematic for both terms. Should the Russian nation in which Dostoevsky wrote really be identified as the same nation as the Soviet nation in which Pyryev released his 1959 film adaptation? Is the 2017 *Belye Nochi*, released in post-Soviet Russia, a transnational adaptation of Dostoevsky's pre-Soviet story or a transnational remake of Pyryev's Soviet film? What about films made under different political regimes within such contested areas as post-colonial Africa, or films made in Poland or the Czech Republic before, during, and after those nations' experiences behind the Iron Curtain, or, for that matter, Shakespearean adaptations produced in the United Kingdom, a political entity that first came into existence only a century after Shakespeare wrote? Instead of trying to answer these specific questions, or the more general question of whether 'transnational adaptation' is a more precise or useful term than 'cross-cultural adaptation' in order to define myself out of the problems raised by the category 'cross-cultural adaptation', I would prefer to consider these problems more closely. What can we learn by examining the implications of the term 'cross-cultural adaptation' as it has been used, presumably in good faith, by earlier commentators?

We might begin by acknowledging the formative role several different kinds of cross-cultural border crossings have already played in the history of adaptation studies. The page-to-screen adaptations that first caught the attention of a critical mass of academics in the second half of the twentieth century, for example, are crossings not only between print media and audio-visual media but between literary culture and what at least the journal *Film Culture* feels safe in identifying in its title as film culture. The critical backlash against film adaptations of classic novels and plays illustrates the ways these adaptations seek to cross from high culture to popular culture, which might otherwise more sharply be opposed as elitist culture and mass culture or, in Dwight Macdonald's terms, as High Culture, Masscult, "a parody of high culture" (Macdonald 1962, 3), whose practitioners, from Edna Ferber to Norman Rockwell to Norman Vincent Peale, "grind out a uniform product whose humble aim is […] distraction" (5), and Midcult, which, through avatars like *Our Town*, *The Old Man and the Sea*, and the Book-of-the-Month Club, "pretends to respect the standards of High Culture while in fact it waters them down and vulgarizes them" (37). More recently, theorists like Carlos Constandinides (2010) and Michael Ryan Moore have examined contemporary adapta-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

tions' crossings from print culture to digital culture in order to consider for example "how the protocols of interactive digital worlds complicate and broaden traditional definitions of adaptation" (Moore 2010, 180). Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn have asked whether crossing from a top-down culture defined by the gatekeepers at publishing houses and film studios to a bottom-up culture defined increasingly by fans of particular stories, heroes, or franchises constitute a game-changer: "For adaptation studies, is ours a transitional time or are we facing a totally new world?" (Hutcheon, O' Flynn 2013, xix). Although these cultures may all be rooted in particular technologies of inscription, distribution, and consumption, they clearly cannot be reduced simply to expressions or extrapolations of those technologies; they all have legitimate claims to cultural status.

A recent cycle of essays in queer and transgender theory by the contributors to Pamela Demory's forthcoming collection *Queer/Adaptation* proposes queering texts, like queering gender categories or personal gender identities, as another kind of border crossing. Anyone who thinks it counterintuitive to categorise queering as a crossing of cultural borders might profit by considering the prominence the metaphor already enjoys in the term "crossdressing" and, suitably garbed in Latin, "transgender", along with the fact that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer cultures are indisputably *cultures* whose deeply contested borders are policed even more rigidly than adaptation scholars' attentiveness to what novels can do that films cannot and vice-versa – witness the Trump administration's recent attempt to define transgender culture out of existence by revising the Title IX definition of gender – and crossed every day despite this policing by individuals seeking identifications with different labels, communities, and cultures. In a parallel development, the contributors to Dan Hassler-Forest and Pascal Nicklas's collection *The Politics of Adaptation* focus on the ways adaptations, by cross the borders between different historical, ideological, and political cultures, incessantly renegotiate "existing social, cultural, and economic hierarchies that can be reaffirmed but also challenged by the new ways in which adaptations are circulated and appropriated" (Hassler-Forest, Nicklas 2015, 1).

A brief consideration of Ingmar Bergman's celebrated film *Persona* (1966) suggests still more borders individuals seeking to express themselves must negotiate, often with devastating consequences. The film's revelation of the increasingly fraught relations between Nurse Alma (played by Bibi Andersson) and her patient, the opera singer Elisabet Vogler (Liv Ullmann), who has suddenly and inexplicably stopped speaking, calls attention to the permeability of a series of personal, psychological, and existential borders we often take for granted: the borders between one individual and the next that popular mythmaking tells us can be breached by sex or marriage or mourning or shared trauma. However, Bergman's film, which shows Alma and Elisabet gradually but radically merging into

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

each other visually, psychologically and spiritually, suggests those borders are far more fluid. Moreover, there are the borders between individuals and the social, political, romantic, and institutional communities on which they largely depend for a sense of their own identity; the borders between mothers and the babies who grow inside them as part of their bodies until at some point they become their own selves; the borders between the living and the dead whose presence and example continues to inspire them; and the borders between the temporal and spiritual realms that are crossed, as we may think, by vampires, zombies, ghosts, and other spectral presences, by Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh, and by a host of other intimations of immortality.

Persona is not an adaptation of any earlier text, except of course for its screenplay, its director's autobiography, his fascination with psychoanalysis, and his contemporaneous immersion in the writings of Carl Jung. But the wealth of variously successful border-crossings its story dramatises calls to mind still another series of border-crossings among collaborators in all the arts, particularly in architecture and cinema, who merge their interests and skills for the sake of creating a single group project; the border-crossings among audience members, again especially in movie theatres, who make common cause by subsuming their individual personalities and preoccupations in a mass audience that laughs and sighs and screams together on cue; and the border-crossings between consumers and the creators who, in the phrase of Joseph Conrad that D.W. Griffith picked up to describe the infant medium of the cinema, want above all "to make you see" (Conrad 1921, xii).

Which of these many realms whose gaps their participants seek to bridge deserves to be called a culture, and which of these activities deserves to be called border-crossing? The question might seem trivial if so much were not at stake in having one's culture recognised as a culture, with all the responsibilities and rights pertaining thereto, as the rise of the so-called culture wars in the eighties would suggest. To take a single example: the charge 'identity politics' is routinely directed against spokespersons who identify themselves with minority or historically oppressed communities in order to make a case for adopting or rejecting specific public policies. The implication of this charge, which is invariably levelled by disputants outside the community in question, is that it is facile and false to politicise your identification with a specific culture. But the charge backfires as soon as we realise that the force of its critique of identification with an insurgent culture depends on the critics' own membership in a majoritarian culture whose status and perks those objectors take so completely for granted that they forget that they are identifying themselves as members of what they might more forthrightly call the *real* culture – and that all cultural identification is irreducibly political. The historical successes of Roman and French and Hollywood culture remind us that culture and politics

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

are nothing more or less than two ways of talking about using collective identification to project social values and effect social change.

Thirty-five years ago, Benedict Anderson asserted that nations are "imagined communities" because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson [1983] 2006, 6). It is worth recalling that Anderson's highly influential formulation was only one specific application of a more general insight that takes the form of his response to Ernest Gellner's argument that "[n]ationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it *invents* nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964, 169; quoted in Anderson [1983] 2006, 6). Rejecting Gellner's implicit distinction between invented and actual communities, Anderson explains:

> [Gellner] implies that 'true' communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. (Anderson [1983] 2006, 6)

Applying Anderson's logic to charges of identity politics suggests that everyone active in politics or communities, including the critics who level charges like 'playing the race card' or 'politicizing their group identities' at others, is practicing identity politics through the simple act of imagining their communities into existence, reifying the identities of those who disagree with them as members of specific communities, and setting those communities against their own equally imagined communities or cultures.

Nor are the majoritarian cultures that condemn insurgents as practicing identity politics nearly as consensual or homogeneous as their spokespersons assume. For every critic who charges that Hollywood remakes of foreign films, for example, illustrate and exacerbate rifts between European and American culture, a journalist lurks nearby ready to remind Americans that they are living these days in a political culture defined by increasingly bitter strife between two warring cultures, each of which considers itself the real culture and its opponents, whether they are stigmatized as condescendingly prescriptive bicoastal intellectual elitists or nostalgic white nationalists who want to Make America Great Again by purging the nation of foreign impurities, as purveyors of identity politics. Any lingering doubts about whether Europeans feel the same way about their national cultures are pointedly addressed by the epigraph Anderson chose for *Imagined Communities*, a passage from *The True-Born Englishman*, the satirical 1701 poem in which Daniel Defoe defended the Dutch-born King William from attacks on his Englishness:

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> Thus from a Mixture of all things began,
> That het'rogeneous Thing, *An Englishman*:
> In eager Rapes, and furious Lust begot,
> Betwixt a Painted *Britton* and a *Scot*:
> Whose gend'ring Offspring quickly learnt to bow,
> And yoke their Heifers to the *Roman* Plough:
> From whence a Mongrel half-bred Race there came,
> With neither Name nor Nation, Speech nor Fame.
> (Anderson [1983] 2006, x; see Defoe 1836, 17-18)

If American and English culture are imagined communities, the same is equally true of European culture, whether it is invoked by classroom teachers seeking to introduce students to a cultural tradition descending form Homer, Plato, and Aristotle, or by commentators posing it as a counterweight to Hollywood, perhaps the most forthrightly imagined culture of them all.

We might usefully broaden this perspective still further by recalling the distinction the novelist C.P. Snow made over half a century ago in his lecture *The Two Cultures*. The two cultures Snow counterposed to each other, the humanities and the sciences, were not overtly political but epistemological, educational, and cosmological. Their participants understood the world in such radically different terms, Snow contended, that they could neither talk nor listen to each other. Humanists in particular came in for Snow's withering criticism because of their impatient dismissal of the relevance of elementary scientific theories and principles they clearly did not understand to their shared culture, which they presumably inhabited secure in their certainty, fuelled by their failure to see that "the scientific culture really is a culture" (Snow 1964, 9) and that humanistic culture was *the* culture. The reaction to Snow went a long way toward confirming his diagnosis of humanistic scholars' and educators' self-willed blindness to the value and the vital importance of science. F.R. Leavis, perhaps the foremost literary critic in England at mid-century, was especially, and predictably, apoplectic at the suggestion that he and the humanistic cultural tradition he was proud to represent could possibly profit by considering alternative ways of thinking that might challenge the cultural hegemony of his own vision, which saw "the centre of a university in a vital English School" (Leavis [1962] 2013, 75).

If the humanities are indeed in crisis, as the historian John Harold Plumb, a friend of Snow's, observed as early as 1964 in his edited volume *Crisis in the Humanities*, the principal lesson this episode in ancient history has to teach us is not that the scientists were right and the humanists wrong, or even that all things must pass, but rather that *culture* is a term we always invoke in hypothetical – or, as Anderson would say, imagined – terms, sometimes to bind us together, as the Great Books programs that persist

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

in St. John's College, Columbia University and the University of Chicago are assumed to do, sometimes to set us apart from rival cultures that we think are fuelled by imperialistic ambitions, agitprop, or identity politics. Depending how you count, the work of decentering majoritarian culture goes back to the Birmingham School of cultural studies, or to Snow's lecture *The Two Cultures*, or to the nineteenth-century battles between the Benthamites and the Coleridgeans, the industrialists and the Luddites. The only observation I have to add to this history is that all cultures, including those of the Luddites and Snow's scientists and the Birmingham School, are *performative* in the specific sense that to name and describe and invoke them is to call them into being, and that there is no other way to do so. Since all cultures are created, not discovered, every time we refer to a specific culture, or culture in general, as a going concern, we are performing that culture, endowing it with power and currency by the very act of naming or describing or invoking it as a system of norms or a touchstone for evaluating other cultures. Although we may regard cultures as archives of norms and values, they are better described as archives of scripts that become effective only in performance. To perform cultures is, in Anderson's terms, to imagine them, though with somewhat less risk that they will be contrasted with the non-imagined cultures Anderson rules are actually nonexistent.

To return to the more specific topic with which I began: calling something a cross-cultural adaptation in order to distinguish it from other presumably non-cross-cultural adaptations is not only eminently defensible but is indeed the only possible way to identify it as a cross-cultural adaptation – a performative category, like all cultural categories, whose ineluctably imaginary basis is aptly indicated by the telltale verb 'identify'. Consider the implications of one such cross-cultural performance: its two characters come from the same St. Petersburg culture. But the city itself, where the Moscow-born Dostoevsky spent much of his life and which he often used as a setting for his fiction, had long been considered a crossroad between Russia and the West. Peter the Great had specifically designed St. Petersburg to put a cosmopolitan, European face on a nativist Mother Russia that continued to shun Europe and persisted in regarding the city as a frontier and an outlier. In addition, the tremulous, timid, nameless narrator, who begins his story by confessing that "although I had been living almost eight years in Petersburg I had hardly an acquaintance" (Dostoevsky 1951, 1), defines himself through his hopeless estrangement from his habitat and clearly feels a specifically cultural division between himself and Nastenka, whose sheltered upbringing by her grandmother reveals a different childhood culture from his, and whose experience of romantic love sets them apart by establishing her membership in a world he can only dream of. And dream he does, in a long, impassioned description of himself as "the dreamer", a third-person account that moves her

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

to reply, “You describe it all splendidly, but couldn’t you please describe it a little less splendidly? You talk as if though you were reading it out of a book” (15). It is a response that confirms at once the distance between him and her, his isolation from the material of his dreams, and even his alienation from his self-created role as “the dreamer”. It is sadly logical that the story ends with the narrator’s reflections on a letter he receives from Nastenka the morning after their last meeting, after he has watched her go off into the night with her returning lover, a letter that begins: “Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I beg you on my knees to forgive me! I deceived you and myself. It was a dream, a mirage” (47). The romance between them that the narrator has imagined has become so foundational to his identity and his hopes for the future that he responds to the death of his impossible dream by looking desperately around the nondescript lodgings from which his landlady Matrona has finally cleared the spider web he once saw as an image of his life envisioning himself “just as I was now, fifteen years hence, older, in the same room, just as solitary, with the same Matrona grown no cleverer for those fifteen years” (49).

These yawning gaps, which doom the narrator’s hopes of romance with Nastenka and even any possibility of emerging from his experience with a more fully integrated self, amount to cultural divisions because the story is so emphatic that the kinds of temperamental, psychological, experiential divisions it dramatises are learned and enculturated in ways that have a formative impact on the characters’ beliefs about who and what they are. The effect of the story depends on the audience’s sympathetic perception that the narrator, hopelessly alienated from his city, his love, and himself, is both a unique individual and a representative type crying out for identification from audiences who respond to him because of their presumed cultural similarities. It is precisely because of the two characters’ simultaneous solicitation and rejection of their identification with cultural categories that Nastenka can ask the narrator, “[H]ow did you find out that I was the sort of woman with whom… well, whom you think worthy… of attention and friendship… in fact, not a landlady as you say?” (8), and the narrator can describe himself as “a type” and explain: “a type is an original, it’s an absurd person! […] It’s a character” (13).

Even more pointedly than Nastenka, Dostoevsky’s narrator is established from the beginning as a liminal figure whose twilight existence estranges him from his city and its inhabitants, and his hopeless dreams of romance. Although *White Nights* is something of an outlier among Dostoevsky’s fiction for its ardently idealized view of romantic love, its narrator is a quintessential example of his keen interest in presenting irreducibly divided heroes who are defined by their troubled relation to the emotional, psychological, and conceptual categories that come closest to defining them. In Mikhail Bakhtin’s highly influential formulation, Dostoevsky is “the creator of the *polyphonic novel*” defined by “*the plurality of independ-*

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

ent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses and the genuine polyphony of full-valued voices" (Bakhtin 1973, 4; italics in the original). Because Dostoevsky's heroes are "*not only objects of the author's word, but subjects of all their own directly significant word*" (Bakhtin 1973, 4; italics in the original), his fiction is heteroglot, and his characters are defined by the warring and incompletely assimilated voices and cultural values they uncomfortably embody. The resulting fictional corpus is therefore carnivalesque and irreducibly multicultural even before it is adapted by other hands, for Dostoevsky's heroes are all incompletely successful adapters of what they fondly believe are their own selves.

Dostoevsky, Bakhtin argues, is a special case in world literature, a triumph of internalised and incompletely inculturated heteroglossia even at the level of individual characters like Ivan Karamazov, Rasknolnikov, Stavrogin, and the nameless narrators of *White Nights* and *Notes from Underground*. But the irreducibly heteroglot nature of his heroes' voices and the notoriously unstable identities they project raise the question of whether there is any such thing as a monoglot text at all. There is no point in looking for such texts among the canon of European novels, since Bakhtin famously pronounced the novel, "the genre of becoming" (Bakhtin 1981, 22), the most heteroglot form because its roots in "experience, knowledge and practice" (15) give it a rapacious appetite for incorporating a wide range of voices, not all of them demarcated by quotation marks, without assimilating them to a single coherent world view. If Dostoevsky's self-tortured heroes make his fiction a textbook example of heteroglossia, much the same could be said for Dickens's carnivalesque attacks on the institutions of Victorian culture, or Thackeray's variously metatextual satires of English history, or Meredith's decorously playful deconstructions of his characters' resolutely blinkered performances of themselves. Nor is it any more likely that we would find such texts in the cinema, a collaborative medium marked, as anecdotal memoirs from Lillian Ross's *Picture* to Julie Solomon's *The Devil's Candy* remind us, by conflicts among the collaborators as fierce as they are unresolved. The franchise adaptations spawned by the tellingly named D.C. and Marvel Universes increasingly bundle competing voices and ideals of superheroes into unstable pickup combat teams incapable of seeing further than their next improbable victory over the forces of evil, and the fanfiction archived in online sites like Fanfiction, Wattpad, and Archive of Our Own elevates heteroglossia into a generative principle.

The presentational genre best suited to monoglot pronouncements might seem to be ritual tragedy – not theatrical comedy, which is more often topical because it is so notoriously sensitive to the shifting winds of cultural change, but tragedies that incarnate Aristotle's recipe of imitating a single action with a beginning, a middle, and an end that reveals the definitive meaning of the entire action. But even a brief consideration of tightly dis-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

ciplined dramas like *Antigone*, *Phèdre*, and *A Doll's House* suggests that, although they may move toward moments of privileged resolution – that is the kinds of endings that Aristotle says are "everywhere the chief thing" (Aristotle 1941, 1461) – what they mainly do is stage cultural conflicts, including most notably in these three plays the conflicts between men's and women's ways of thinking about and acting in a sharply divided world. No wonder that Bakhtin himself remarks parenthetically that "tragedy is a polyglot genre" (Bakhtin 1981, 12). Any pretense the endings of Athenian tragedies have to definitive monoglot wisdom is undermined by the fact that so many of them, from *Agamemnon* to *Antigone*, generated sequels and prequels, and the fact that their audience came to theatre expecting to see three tragedies and a farce presented on a single bill of fare.

The genre Bakhtin himself contrasts with the novel is of course the epic, "a genre that has come down to us as already well defined and real" (14), a genre "whose constitutive feature is the transferral of the world it describes to an absolute past of national beginnings and peak times" in which "it is memory, and not knowledge, that serves as the source and power for the creative impulse" (15). Yet this contrast, as Bakhtin acknowledges, is itself performative rather than categorical. Since epic and novel represent absolute types rather than observed realities, it makes sense for him to observe: "In the era of Hellenism a closer contact with the heroes of the Trojan epic cycle began to be felt; epic is already being transformed into novel" (15). Bakhtin's critical performance of the novel as "the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted" (3), has particular resonance in our time. Because "[t]he novel has no canon of its own, as do other genres", it follows for Bakhtin that "[s]tudying other genres is analogous to studying dead languages; studying the novel, on the other hand, is like studying languages that are not only alive, but still young" (3). Readers approaching Bakhtin today will find these descriptions uncannily accurate, not of the novel, but of the digital universe, whose meteoric rise has relegated the novel to a status very much like the status Bakhtin assigned the epic: a canon of works written in dead languages that cannot compete in immediacy, contingency, or the potential for fruitful and entertaining interactivity with blogs, fan fiction, streaming videos, video games, social media, or whatever digital productions and affordances are lurking around the corner. The most urgent lessons Bakhtin has for contemporary genre theorists are not that the epic is monoglot and the novel heteroglot, or that epic and novel are categorical opposites, but that the invention of the printing press ushered in a centuries-long period of increasingly heteroglot genres and adaptations and that every genre is likely to appear heteroglot compared to the genres that precede it and monoglot compared to the genres that follow.

There is no such thing as a monoglot adaptation, in other words, for at least two reasons. The first is that there is no such thing as a monoglot

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

text, not even the brief love poem we know as Catullus 85 that begins *Odi et amo* (Catullus 1970, 152-3), or more precisely that what we define as monoglot texts are texts we are performing as counterweights to texts to which we prefer to reserve the label of heteroglossia. The second is that every text, whether or not it is explicitly marked and marketed as an adaptation, depends for its understanding on its audiences' experience of the earlier texts defined as relatively or absolutely monoglot that have put its premises, ideas, and visions of human experience into play. Indeed, the very idea of the monocultural adaptations that would presumably provide a contrasting point of departure for cross-cultural adaptation seems futile, since there would be no economic or epistemological point to producing or consuming them as long as the texts that had provided their own inspiration remained available. Every act of reframing inevitably introduces cross-cultural perspectives. But so does every act of framing, which recasts every novelistically or cinematically observed version of St. Petersburg as a foreign city. Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg is as remote from the city's observed reality as the England of the heritage adaptations broadcast on British television is from the novels of Jane Austen, or indeed as Austen's highly-wrought novels are from the world of Regency England.

Instead of seeking some way to differentiate between cross-cultural and monocultural adaptations, therefore, we would be better-off asking two other questions that would acknowledge more fully the ubiquity of the cross-cultural adaptations that produce what Linda Hutcheon has called "a kind of dialogue between the society in which the works, both the adapted text and the adaptation, were produced and that in which they are received" (Hutcheon 2013, 149). We could replace the binary between monocultural and cross-cultural adaptations by asking whether, when stories travel, to borrow the resonant phrase Cristina Della Coletta uses as the title of *When Stories Travel: Cross-Cultural Encounters between Fiction and Film*, they seek to maintain their identities as far as possible, to assimilate to what they take to be their host cultures, or to challenge the laws and categories under which they were admitted. And we could consider the implications of this analysis for the study of adaptation as a border-crossing practice if we asked how adaptation studies might change if its practitioners acknowledged more candidly the liminal, marginal, political, worldly dimension of both adaptations and the apparently more stable texts they adapted. In one possible application of this second question, we could complicate Hutcheon's distinction between knowing and unknowing audiences by observing that the target audiences for adaptations are always both knowing and unknowing, eagerly anticipating certain features of every adaptation while unaware, or equally eager to disavow their knowledge, of others. Replacing the either/or logic of Hutcheon's analysis with a both/and logic would enable us to put a new spin on her influential definition of adaptation as appealing to the desire for both fa-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

miliarity and novelty: given that all texts are more or less familiar simply by virtue of the textual features that appeal to foundational principles of literacy, adaptations are new texts that it suits at least some parties to their production, distribution, and consumption to imagine to be reworkings of familiar texts.

Changing our understanding of cross-cultural adaptation to admit every adaptation and every other text ever created may seem an unhelpfully holistic manoeuvre that risks throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Certainly the costs of changing the ways we think about cross-cultural adaptation would be considerable. Even if we cannot differentiate cross-cultural from monocultural adaptation because there is no such thing as a monocultural adaptation, however, the question still arises how we can best distinguish among the different *kinds* of border-crossing that are currently labelled adaptation and translation, or transnational and intermedial adaptation, or adaptation and remediation. Answering this question would take me far beyond the orbit of this essay; the best I can do here is suggest that nominal alternatives like ‘transnational’ and ‘intermedial’ or ‘translingual’ and ‘intermedial’ or ‘adaptation’ and ‘remediation’ are not best represented as comprising one of the dualities that have so exercised adaptation and translation scholars, because adaptations, like translations, pastiches, performances, revisions, and indeed all text-making of any kind, can cross many borders without necessarily negotiating any either/or dichotomies. Crossing borders and paying the price in a lack of purity, pedigree, and sometimes even intelligibility, in fact, is their vocation: it is the reason we continue to seek them out, consume them with relish, and even gather in classrooms and chat rooms to discuss them.

If all adaptations are cross-cultural adaptations, why do we call some of them cross-cultural and not others? Every time we label an adaptation a cross-cultural *adaptation*, I would suggest, our performance promotes what we take to be its culture of origin and its culture of reception to the status of *cultures* as well. To call foreign film adaptations, but not Russian film adaptations, of Dostoevsky cross-cultural is to pronounce the national cultures in question as more important, more central, more truly *cultural* than other possible competitors like literary and film cultures or elitist and popular cultures or straight and queer cultures. At the same time, to refer to border crossings as primarily crossings between nations rather than languages, media, or modes of presentation and reception premises that these latter borders are less fraught, less consequential, and less salient than national borders, perhaps because we think that national borders, like rivers and mountain ranges, are naturally given and these other borders only metaphorical because we have chosen to overlook the fact that many other rivers and mountain ranges might well have served as equally natural-seeming borders instead. The example of Benedict Anderson, however, should remind us that although every border can be marked, negotiated,

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

and crossed in many different ways, all borders, like the adaptations that cross them, are imagined, stipulated, or performed rather than naturally given – a fact that the persistence of adaptation reminds us of every day.

Bibliography

Anderson, Benedict [1983] (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso.

Aristotle (1941). "De Poetica". McKeon, Richard (ed.), *Basic Works of Aristotle*. Transl. by Ingram Bywater. New York: Random House, 1453-87.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M (1973). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Transl. by R.W. Rotsel. New York: Ardis.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. (1981). "Epic and Novel". *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist; transl. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 3-40.

Burry, Alexander (2016). "Introduction: Filming Russian Classics—Challenges and Opportunities". Burry, Alexander; White, Frederick H. (eds), *Border Crossing: Russian Literature into Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1-16. DOI `https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474411424.003.0013`.

Catullus (1970). *The Complete Poems for American Readers*. Transl. by Reney Myers and Robert J. Ormsby. New York: Dutton.

Conrad, Joseph (1921). «Preface». *The Nigger of the "Narcissus". The Works of Joseph Conrad*, vol. 3. London: Heinemann, viii–xii.

Constandinides, Costas (2010). *From Film Adaptation to Post-Celluloid Adaptation: Rethinking the Transition of Popular Narratives and Characters Across Old and New Media*. New York: Continuum. DOI `https://doi.org/10.5040/9781628927931`.

Defoe, Daniel (1836). *The True-Born Englishman: A Satire*. Leeds: Alice Mann.

Della Coletta, Cristina (2012). *When Stories Travel: Cross-Cultural Encounters Between Fiction and Film*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1353/book.13507`.

Demory, Pamela (ed.) (2019). *Queer/Adaptation: A Collection of Critical Essays*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05306-2`.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor (1951). *White Nights and Other Stories*. Transl. by Constance Garnett. New York: Macmillan.

Gellner, Ernest (1964). *Thought and Change*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.

Hassler-Forest, Dan; Pascal Nicklas (2015). "Introduction". Hassler-Forest, Dan; Nicklas, Pascal (eds), *The Politics of Adaptation: Media*

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Convergence and Ideology. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-4. DOI https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137443854_1.

Horton, Andrew; McDougal, Stuart Y. (eds) (1998). *Play It Again, Sam: Retakes on Remakes*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Hutcheon, Linda; O'Flynn, Siobhan (2013). *A Theory of Adaptation*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203095010.

Leavis, F.R. [1962] (2013). *Two Cultures? The Significance of C.P. Snow*. Cambridge (NY): Cambridge University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781107337169.

Macdonald, Dwight (1962). "Masscult and Midcult". *Against the American Grain: Essays on the Effects of Mass Culture*. New York: Random House, 3-75.

Moore, Michael Ryan (2010). "Adaptation and New Media". *Adaptation* 3(2), 179-92. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apq010.

Plumb, John Harold (ed.) (1964). *Crisis in the Humanities*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Poirier, Richard (1971). "What Is English Studies, and If You Know What That Is, What Is English Literature?". *The Performing Self: Compositions and Decompositions in the Languages of Contemporary Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 86-111.

Ross, Lillian (1952). *Picture: A Story about Hollywood*. New York: Rinehart.

Salamon, Julie (1991). *The Devil's Candy: The Bonfire of the Vanities Goes to Hollywood*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Smith, Iain Robert; Verevis, Constantine (eds) (2017). *Transnational Film Remakes*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9781474407236.001.0001.

Snow, C.P. (1964). *The Two Cultures: and A Second Look*. Cambridge: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

‘#DifferenceMakesUs’: Selling Shakespeare Online (and the Commerce Platform Etsy)

Anna Blackwell
(De Monfort University, UK)

Abstract The mission statement of the online creative commerce platform Etsy declares its commitment to “using the power of business to strengthen communities and empower people”. Among the many handmade and vintage items sold on Etsy are 3,811 items quoting Helena’s description of Hermia from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (“and though she be but little, she is fierce”). This journal paper will examine the relationship between Shakespeare and the predominantly female crafts people who operate through platforms such as these as well as Shakespeare’s own depiction of female craft and handcrafted items. It seeks to explore the processes at work in Shakespeare-inspired merchandise and the relationship they claim to the play texts they adapt. The paper will continue by situating ‘female’ oriented creative work within the current political climate and exploring both the possibilities and limitations of craft as a vehicle for political resistance.

Keywords Shakespeare. Adaptation. Sewing. Handcraft. Neoliberalism. Women. Feminism.

1 Introduction

Maria Grazia Chiuri made history when she launched her Spring 2017 collection of clothing down the runways of Paris Fashion Week. Having spent years working at fashion houses such as Valentino and Fendi, Chiuri had just become the first ever female creative director of the luxury company, Christian Dior. Her debut was already significant on those grounds; however, the fashion journalist Jess Cartner-Morley noted a more significant aspect of this show. The most eye-catching outfit on display was, Cartner-Morley argued, not “a traditional waisted Dior Bar Jacket, or a fairy-tale red-carpet gown” (Cartner-Morley 2016), but a slogan t-shirt bearing the title of an essay and TED talk written by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: ‘We should all be feminists’. Cartner-Morley continued that the opportunity for a woman to redefine what femininity looks like “could hardly come at a more culturally resonant time” as Hillary Clinton, the first female American presidential candidate was then facing an opposing

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/002
Submitted: 2018-11-24 | Accepted: 2018-12-5

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

campaign from later President Donald Trump "mired in accusations of misogyny" (Cartner-Morley 2016). Indeed, although perhaps ahead of the curve, Dior was not alone in producing politically-inflected and specifically feminist fashion that year. A season later, the clothes on display at New York Fashion Week bought similarly into an aesthetic of protest. Notable graphic prints included Christian Siriano's 'People are People', Creatures of Comfort's 'We Are All Human Beings' and Jonathan Simkhai's 'Feminist AF [as fuck]'. Keen to monopolise their earlier success, meanwhile, Dior produced a striped t-shirt bearing the question 'Why have there been no great women artists' from Linda Nochlin's 1971 art history essay of the same name.

The connection between fashion and politics further intensified. Nepalese-American designer Prabal Gurung's show at the same fashion week concluded with slogans including 'Revolution Has No Borders', 'I Am An Immigrant' and 'The Future is Female'. The sentiment of the latter statement, though chiefly optimistic, was bittersweet: only six days prior to Gurung's show, it had been uttered by Hillary Clinton in her first public statement since the inauguration of Trump to office as President. This phenomenon also has historical precedence, of course. There is a long and well-documented connection between textiles and feminist political activism. Victoria Mitchell writes, for instance, of the women who opposed nuclear war at Greenham Common and with their textiles, banners and hand-knit shelters "literally wove themselves into the site of their protest" (Mitchell 2000, 39). It should be noted, meanwhile, that the 'The Future is Female' slogan can be traced back to a t-shirt design made for Labyris Books, the first women's bookshop in New York, in the mid-seventies. The statement's ancestry and its connections to a radical feminism has not been explicitly recognised by Gurung who nevertheless claims influence from "what Gloria Steinam was doing in the 70s" (Reed, Moore 2017) but it is acknowledged by the independent retailer Otherwild who sell a version of the same t-shirt with 25% of proceeds donated to the American reproductive health care charity, Planned Parenthood.

The same potential for textiles to articulate resistance (in this case opposition to the Trump administration in America) was articulated outside of high fashion during that same period. Although the 2017 International Women's March took place officially to protest for women's rights in a general sense, a large number of protesters attended the day wearing bright pink 'pussyhats'. The garment was the brainchild of design architect Jayne Zweiman and screenwriter Krista Suh and the designer of the original pattern, Kay Coyle. Zweiman and Suh wanted to craft an object that would show feminist solidarity – not only to the protesters on the day but to others, like Zweiman, who were not able to attend in person. They came up with the 'pussyhat' concept, chosen "in part", they share, "as a protest against vulgar comments Donald Trump made about the freedom he felt

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

to grab women's genitals" but also to "de-stigmatize the word 'pussy' and transform it into one of empowerment" ("Our Story" s.d.). The same strategy of responding creatively and critically to Trump's misogyny was evident in the popularity of placards (but, later, of memorabilia and clothing) referencing and parodying Trump's description of Clinton as 'such a nasty woman'. As Gabrielle Moss wrote, with each new misogynistic gaffe by Trump, women's rights protesters found new ways to "show not just your hatred of Trump and his policies, but also the joy you took in being the kind of woman he would loath" (Moss 2017).

2 'Shakescrafts'

But where does Shakespeare fit into all of this? The answer is that he is not exempt from the same marketisation of feminism that has seen both a top-down commodification of politics by fashion and lifestyle brands and a bottom-up movement capitalising on the current popularity of handcrafted, non-profit or small business version of feminist statements. In fact, Sujatar Iyengar argues that "'Shakespeare' offers a liminal, intermedial space between branded, profit-generating, mass-market industry and independent, financially threatened, idiosyncratic cultural production" (Iyengar 2014, 347). Nowhere is Shakespeare's ability to traverse and occupy the space between both modes more apparent than on e-commerce websites like Etsy. A self-described "global marketplace for unique and creative good" ("About Etsy" n.d.), Etsy helps independent sellers to advertise their wares to a much larger audience and in a more sophisticated way than might otherwise be possible. In return, of course, for a cut of the sellers' profits. At the time of writing, the search term 'Shakespeare' brings up 10,853 results from the retailers who use Etsy's online store fronts to sell the kind of upcycled, handmade, crafted, vintage or vintage-inspired goods with which the website's name is now (often parodically) synonymous.[1] As a point of comparison, a search for the highly popular television series *Game of Thrones* (a shorthand also for the 'A Song Of Ice and Fire' series of fantasy novels by George R.R. Martin which the series is adapted from) brings up 50,000 results on Etsy. *Game of Thrones* is by any standards a significant part of contemporary popular culture and its quasi-medieval setting and fantasy genre supply quite readily the type of audience mem-

1 The satirical record of popular vernacular, *Urban Dictionary*, defines goods from Etsy as "overpriced junk and cheap, trashy, idiotic or otherwise useless items". The website's entry assesses Etsy cynically, noting (perhaps accurately) that few items are "actually handmade" but are rather inexpensively and inexpertly thrown together and "resold to suckers […] for a 2700% markup". Vintage items are simply "weathered, rusted, [or] stained with dog or cat urine" (Muscoffo 2015), and Etsy retailers delusional egotists.

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

ber interested in purchasing a personalised house sigil or a replica weapon. Other transmedia juggernauts like *Harry Potter* offer a not dissimilar amount of results (77,605) that speak to a continued appetite among fans for affiliation through merchandise. Shakespeare's place in all of this and seeming popularity on Etsy (or at the very least the expectation thereof; we cannot be sure how many of these items are ever sold) thus speaks to his ability to be at once a reliable source of income, a recognisable brand and a mass-commodified item and the occasion for individual, handmade, small-scale specialist production in accordance with the website's purpose. This is perhaps all the more remarkable because, unlike the makers of *Game of Thrones* or *Harry Potter*-inspired goods, online Shakespearean sellers do not rely upon a singular or stable intellectual property. Shakespeare's popularity may see peaks and troughs that correspond roughly to high-profile adaptations or performances but, for the most part, interest in the playwright seemingly sustains itself.

The offerings themselves, meanwhile, are a varied mixture of items that quote from Shakespeare's plays, reference his characters or trade on his name and semblance. They do all of this to a greater or lesser extent, inviting differing levels of participation in Shakespeare-enjoyment for their consumers. One can compare, for instance, a vintage-style pendant with the rather oblique statement, "Shakespeare is sexy",[2] with an embroidery pattern for a sampler with Benedict's call to Beatrice, "Lady Disdain".[3] Clearly both objects appeal to the same Shakespeare fan base, but they invite consumers to mobilise their interest in different ways; the former by wearing the item and the latter through a more time-intensive task of sewing the pattern. In other cases, the reification of one's Shakespearean fandom might come at the point of purchase itself. BardBombsApothecary sells a wide range of bath bombs, each of which is named after either a play or a character within a Shakespeare play. Both the physical design of the bomb (its colour and texture) and its constituent ingredients are intended to match up to the chosen Shakespearean influence, and these intentions are explained by the maker in the copy used to sell the item. The *Richard II* bath bomb, for instance, is based on the "ill fated Richard II": "a beautiful cautionary tale, which eventually sets the groundwork for the War of the Roses".[4] The bomb is thus a pale white colour with rose coloured flecks and a with a small rose at its centre. It is made from rose fragrant oil, dried roses, powdered milk and kokum butter "so [that] you feel like royalty". Details such as these speak to the perceived personal

2 See BookishGirl. "Shakespeare is Sexy Nacklace". URL `https://etsy.me/2DFlgFe` (2019-02-14).

3 See Plasticlittlecovers. "Lady Disdain". URL https://etsy.me/2Sx4eU4 (2018-11-23).

4 See "The Richard II". URL `https://etsy.me/2S0qHnd` (2019-02-14).

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

touch of independent sellers and yet, like the bath bomb itself, they invite an ephemeral form of fan engagement that must exist more at the moment of purchase (the pleasure of selecting your chosen bomb) than of use. Unless, that is, one muses on Richard in the bath.

Regardless of their duration, the result can be Shakespeare-inspired goods that are aesthetically pleasing and playfully and knowingly presented. The Shakespeare aficionados are entertained both by the act of purchasing, and in their subsequent ownership of an item which reifies their fan identification. As Graham Holderness and Brian Loughrey note in their work on 'Shakesbeers', "Capitalism can now produce Shakespearean materials that display a textual richness and diversity that do justice to the dramatic works from which the material originally derives" (2016, 120). The examples, which inspired this paper, are not Holderness and Loughrey's textually rich objects, however. Rather, they represent the broad malleability and adaptability of Shakespeare and allow me to reconnect the opening work of this article on feminist fashion with what Iyengar terms "Shakescrafts" (2014, 348). While searching for representative examples of Shakescrafts on Etsy, one thing came up more than any other: items that bear Helena's description of her friend, Hermia, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, "though she but little, she is fierce" (Shakespeare 1988, III, 2, 335-6). Although it is impossible to ascertain that Etsy's search function only returns unique results, it is still remarkable that searching for this quotation alone produced 2,950 results. This is all the more significant because, unlike many of the other quotations that have made their way onto merchandise, "though she but little" has a largely derogatory tone. It is not superficially romantic ("I would not wish any companion in the world but you", *The Tempest* III, 1, 54-5); inspirational ("it is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves" (Shakespeare 1998, I, 2, 141-2); a frequently mangled version of "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars" from *Julius Caesar*, III, 1, 57); profound or tragic ("To be or not to be", *Hamlet*) or contemplative ("I like this place. And willingly could waste my time in it", *As You Like It*, 2006, II, 4, 90-1). The line is instead uttered in frustration within the play by Helena about her apparent love rival, Hermia. It is the third reference to Hermia's short stature in the scene and all three references needle Hermia's sensitivity about her height. Hermia attacks her friend first with words, describing the taller Helena as a "painted maypole" (Shakespeare 1988, III, 2, 296) and warning her that she is not so small that she cannot reach Helena's eyes with her nails (III, 2, 298). The scene's comic characterisation of the seemingly tall, confused Helena and the furious, small Hermia then reaches its particularly hurtful conclusion when Lysander dismisses his former lover as a "dwarf" (III, 3, 317).

Yet, the quotation's insulting nature is not explained or advertised when it is incorporated into Shakescrafts. Neither is it part of the roaring trade

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

in Shakespeare insult-themed goods that sees quotations like Jacques' scathing assessment that the Duke Senior's brain is "as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage"[5] printed on a glass or "Thine face is not worth sunburning"[6] on a vintage-style locket, a slight misquotation of Henry's wry self-description to Katherine (Shakespeare 1995a, V, 2, 146-8). Here the pleasure seemingly lies in the purchasers' ability to use or wear a scathing insult, and thus incorporate it into their everyday life without the knowledge or awareness of the casual observer. One reviewer of the *As You Like It* glass, for instance, enjoyed using it "real subtle like" while teaching *Macbeth* and "seeing how long it takes for one of the students to notice!" (Etsy Tanya 2018). Instead, 'though she be but little' is put to positive and straight-forward effect on Etsy. It becomes a statement of female power: a reminder that despite sexual dimorphism, women are capable of strength in other ways. In Hermia's, the line reminds us of her 'fierceness'. Testament to this reading and the subsequent reproduction of the line is the overwhelming amount of items bearing it, which are targeted at young girls or which indicate children and/or girls as a potential consumer through their metadata. After all, Helena's efforts to belittle her friend lose some of their sting and become an accurate description when applied to the most mundane conclusion: the smallness of a child.

A similar strategy was indeed used by the Royal Shakespeare Company when they released their own range of merchandise featuring the line, entitled 'Fierce'. In stock for a number of years now, the RSC seem to have just pre-empted the vogue for feminist or female-positive statements on household objects and clothes. The line bears similar hallmarks to later Etsy products, however, with its targeting of female Shakespeare through a consistent bright pink and white colour scheme. And although the relatively inexpensive range includes merchandise suitable for any age (including notebooks, badges and bags), the inclusion of a baby bib and baby grow in the line indicates a similar awareness of the pleasure and humour to be gained from ascribing Hermia's littleness to an infant.

A contributive factor beyond this, which speaks to the line's potential popularity among makers and consumers, is the different inflection that 'fierce' possesses. Fierceness is not only the ability to be physically violent, frightening or powerful. It has acquired through use in gay culture in the late nineties and early noughties a generally positive quality, bestowing upon the described an exceptionality, whether evident through fashion-

5 See RealPeopleGoods. "Shakespearean Insult Shot Glass - Sarcasm Shakespeare Gift - English Teacher Gift - Thespian Present - Remainder Biscuit After a Voyage". URL `https://etsy.me/2S1TgR3` (2018-11-23).

6 BijouxMalou. "Shakespeare Insult Necklace Insult in Style Thine Face is Not Worth Sunburning Shakespeare Quote Henry V Quote". URL `https://etsy.me/2DBzVkJ` (2018-11-23).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

able clothing, self-confidence and ability, or an unapologetic boldness. This newer meaning, like the potential attribution of the description to a small child, works to lessen the line's original insulting quality and to reframe it instead as an admiring statement of female power. Of course, a good deal of the items sold on Etsy bearing this quotation serve no particular or explicit political purpose. But a further search on Etsy for the terms 'Shakespeare' and 'feminist' produced 105 results and, of those, 80 featured the same line again or derivative variants thereof, including 'she is fierce' or 'little but fierce'. In the online world of Shakescraft, 'though she but little, she is fierce' is thus a Trumpian soundbite: a phrase that can be repurposed for feminist use. The association of early modern women with obedience and silence can be reimagined through an example of outspokenness against the odds (that Hermia wields power in spite of her size), just as the fearful and misogynistic rhetoric of Trump's speech can be wielded against him in protest. That this is a strategy that makes a virtue of its unlikeliness is evident in the quasi-surprised tone of the copy used to sell the 'though she but little' medal holder display racks: 'Sometimes big things come in small packages!'

3 Women and Craft in Shakespeare's Plays

It is nonetheless apt that the most popular craft version of Shakespeare on Etsy comes from and relates to the two characters whose previously loving friendship is invoked through a description of embroidery and whose conversation reveals not only the pleasures of craft but the skill of the crafter. Earlier in the same scene (III, 2) where Helena delivers her more famous assessment of Hermia, she laments her friend's apparent betrayal, questioning the loss of their 'sisters' vows' and 'school-days' friendship':

> We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
> Have with our needles created both one flower,
> Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
> Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
> As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
> Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
> Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an union in partition;
> Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
> So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
> Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
> Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
> (Shakespeare 1988, III, 2, 203-14)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Helena beseeches her friend to remember the closeness they once had – the time they spent with their heads bowed over a sampler, stitching together one flower; sat on one cushion; singing one song with two voices in the same key. Her speech is a paean to female friendship as the image of jointly-crafted embroidery gives way to the double cherry, "seeming parted, but yet an union in partition" (Shakespeare 1988, III, 2, 209-10) and to two berries hanging off the same stem. The intimacy between the two young women is mapped onto these lush images as an artificial separation of bodies but a unity of heart (a sentiment that can be mapped pleasingly onto the connections forged in joint political protest).

The ability of craft and embroidery in particular to speak for bonds of female friendship, family and community is apparent elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays. Alison Findlay writes that sewing "showed that woman's industry, identity and place were in the home rather than in the public sphere of male activity". In the case of *Coriolanus*, while Martius "fights abroad, his wife and mother sit down on two low stools to sew and to care for the child Martius" (Findlay 2014). But unlike Helena and Hermia who are connected by their shared labour, the sewing in act one, scene three of the play demonstrates the fraught relationship between mother-in-law and daughter. Volumnia protests against her daughter-in-law's sombre demeanour, sharing blithely her delight at sending Coriolanus off to war even as Virgilia blanches at the mere description of violence. Sewing thus provides the social occasion in which Volumnia can pontificate over her daughter-in-law, but Virgilia sews for a much more desperate reasons. Her refusal to leave the house when invited to by the visiting noblewoman, Valeria, and her frenzied commitment to domestic industry does indeed, as Findlay suggests, emphasise her "wifely modesty" (2014). Yet Valeria's disappointed likening of Virgilia to Penelope is telling. Virgilia's Penelope-like fidelity to Coriolanus, sewing endlessly while awaiting his return, is a tedious display of feminine devotion to both Volumnia and Valeria. The latter scolds her, "Come; I; I would your cambric were sensible as your finger, that you might leave pricking it for pity" (Shakespeare 2011, I, 3, 80).

The two sew in the first place, of course, because it is a virtuous, productive and refined way for a noblewoman to spend her time. It is for this reason that Valeria's invitation for them to put down their needlework is to cast away their initially praised role as "manifest house-keepers" (Shakespeare 2011, I, 3, 48) for one of the "idle huswife" (III, 3, 66). To wit, Bianca is instructed by her father to "ply" (Shakespeare 2010, II, 1, 25) her needle rather than continue to row with her unmannerly sister, in *The Taming of the Shrew*. This association of sewing with a feminine ideal that is restrained and (self)disciplined is echoed in Ophelia's account of being disrupted by Hamlet while she was sewing in her closet. While her embroidery works to fix, to impose order upon a design, Hamlet both literally and symbolically unravels. His unhinged behaviour and cryptic,

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

non-verbal utterances are accompanied by unlaced clothing, drooping and fouled stockings.

Queen Catharine meanwhile mobilises this association when she is visited by the Cardinals who seek her compliance in divorcing King Henry. Catharine, who is suspicious of their motives and will not assist them in their task, noting that "all hoods make not monks" (Shakespeare 2000, III, 1, 23), presents herself deliberately as a model of feminine virtue. She welcomes the men into her chambers with the comment that they interrupt her playing the "part of a housewife" (Shakespeare 2000, III, 1, 24). As their conversation progresses, and the Cardinal's motives becoming increasingly and upsettingly clear to Catharine, she performs the role of the housewife once more. She exclaims, "I was set at work | among my maids, full little – god knows – looking | either for such men or such business" (Shakespeare 2000, III, 1, 73-5). Catharine presents herself as an unimpeachable royal mistress: the virtuous housewife sewing industriously with her women with no desire or expectation to be involved in matters of high state. Of course, such performances are of limited efficacy when Catharine has already outgrown her role as Henry's wife. Hers is a case of delaying the inevitable rather than preventing it. Craft's limitations as a tool of signification are more painfully exposed in both *Cymbeline* and *Othello*; plays where the meaning that the textiles once had is wrested away from its bearer. In the case of *Othello* and the infamous handkerchief "spotted with strawberries" (Shakespeare 2001, III, 3, 431), its fate to be misread as a symbol of adultery was set from its conception. Othello shares that his mother was given the handkerchief by an Egyptian "charmer" who could "almost read | The thoughts of people" (Shakespeare 2001, III, 4, 54-5) and who promised that owning the object would prevent her husband from straying, while losing it would ensure his infidelity. A doubly enchanted item, the handkerchief itself was made by a "sibyl" who "in her prophetic fury sew'd the work" from holy silk (Shakespeare 2001, III, 4, 67-9). Whether it worked for Othello's mother is never wholly clear but the charmer's prophecy certainly became true for Othello, even if – most tragically – not for Desdemona.

The skill of the crafter appears in an even more devastating way in *Titus Andronicus*. Lavinia's skill in sewing is taken away from her so that the potential of craft as a mode of female expression is unfulfilled and unexpressed. On discovering his niece and her mutilated body, Marcus makes a direful comparison to the mythological Athenian princess Philomela, who was raped by her sister's husband Tereus, who tore out her tongue in order to silence her. Marcus observes that Philomela lost "but" her tongue and "in a tedious sampler sew'd her mind" (Shakespeare 1995b, II, 4, 38-9) in order to reveal her abuser. Lavinia's attackers, Chiron and Demetrius, were a "craftier Tereus" (Shakespeare 1995b, II, 4, 41), however, removing that option from her by cutting off "those pretty fingers [...] | That

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

could have better sew'd than Philomel" (Shakespeare 1995b, II, 4, 42-3). Lavinia thus resorts to a much cruder means to reveal the perpetrators of this "heinous, bloody deed" (Shakespeare 1995b, IV, 1, 80).

Susan Frye writes that the dramatic importance of textiles and female craft "impersonate" their centrality to early modern women. The plays "enact" the significance that textiles again as "objects whose production offered to make the lives of women meaningful safe". And yet, because they locate women's worth in household materials and labour, the plays also chart the vulnerability of both textiles and women to "erotic and misogynistic interpretation" (Frye 2010, 190).

4 The Precarity of Craft

The potentially expressive value of female craft, be it literal act of making or more figurative uses, is indeed effaced throughout Shakespeare's plays by variously, its removal, acts of male misreading and the generally secondary quality of the female characters. The makers of Shakescraft on Etsy experience a different kind of vulnerability, but one that also demands attention because, like Lavinia's frustrated efforts, female creativity and expression mean nothing in a world that places little literal or symbolic value on women's autonomy. If she could have sewn, Lavinia may well have created a more skilled rendering of her assault than her mythical counterpart. But to complain about the loss of Lavinia's skill at such a time seems only to echo the obscenity of the original crime. In the particular case of Etsy, however, two contextual issues are of importance: the first, is the overwhelmingly female make-up of its crafters, reckoned at 88% in 2014 ("The Art and Craft of Business" 2014), and the second is contemporary employment practices. Under neoliberalism, each subject is "held responsible and account-able for his or her own actions and well-being" and "individual success or failure is interpreted in terms of entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings [...] rather than being attributed to any systemic property" (Harvey 2007, 64-5). This self-governance maps onto the demands of neoliberal capitalism and a contracting job market place where individuals are increasingly required to freelance, to work short-term or zero-hour contracts; where the ability to monetize different aspects of your professional ability is essential.

Neoliberal capitalism, of course, profits from the reduced cost of workers' benefits and pensions and sells such 'gig' employment as a preferable alternative: you can work from home if you like! You can choose your own hours! You can pursue that artistic side-line you always dreamt of! This narrative is potent for those seeking a type of employment outside of an office-based, 9-to-5 norm. And such a feeling must only be compounded by having the kind of caring responsibilities or conditions that make tra-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

ditional full-time work practices impossible and that make precariousness seem like a valid way of regaining control. This is dangerous; precarity does not protect you or make you more dynamic. It exposes you and, of course, those who most need adaptability in work can least afford the costs should it fail, or change (least we should forget, burdens of care fall overwhelmingly on women). The allure of self-employment within a neoliberal economy is particularly treacherous in creative labour, because of what Angela McRobbie calls "the normative expectation of the pain" of precarity. The possibility of self-expressiveness and a "passionate attachment to something called 'my own work'" becomes a "compelling status justification (and also a disciplinary mechanism)" for tolerating uncertainty and for staying – unprofitably – within the creative sector (McRobbie 2004, 132).

This means, according to Sarah Mosle, that what e-commerce sites like Etsy are peddling are not only handicrafts but "the feminist promise that you can have a family and create hip arts and crafts from home during flexible, reasonable hours while still having a respectable, fulfilling, and remunerative career" (Mosle 2009). This promise, she argues, is an untenable fantasy and one that dooms many makers to below minimum-wage employment and unhealthy, all-hour work practices. And this is the precarity that lies behind so many of the 'though she but little' Shakescraft items on Etsy. As it is for Shakespeare's good housewives, the economically emancipatory or expressive value of female craft is effaced by its vulnerability to exploitation. Of course, this does not negate the feminist potential of such goods but it does complicate it, as does the fact that contemporary craft is, Susan Luckman argues, marked by its whiteness. Luckman writes that the "gatekeeping requirements" of makers fairs and design craft markets are echoed online and indeed, elevate a "particular kind of northern European high design sensibility" (2015, 7).

Returning to the meeting place between craft and the post-Trump political landscape yields a prime example of not only this but the perceived difficulty of feminist protest led by white women (to which the 2017 International Women's march and later #MeToo movements both belong).[7] As Nicole Dawkins observes, craft offers us a "revealing standpoint" (2011, 275) from which to explore "the ever-changing plurality of positions and issues that constitute feminisms today" (Braithwaite 2002, 342). A phrase that found particular resonance during this period and in protest against

7 The #MeToo movement spread virally in October of 2017, popularised by white stars like Alyssa Milano and Ashley Judd. It sought to raise awareness for the sexual harassment and assault of women and challenge its normalisation and gained particular traction in the wake of the allegations made against Hollywood producer, Harvey Weinstein. The phrase had been used online as early as 2006, however, created by African American social activist Tarana Burke in response to a thirteen-year-old girl's confession of sexual assault. While Burke has received some acknowledgement for role, including being named as one of *Time* magazine's 'silence breakers', her part has largely been erased in favour of a narrative of celebrity-led activism.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the sexism demonstrated by the Trump administration and the President himself was uttered by Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell in response to the actions of the senior senator from Massachusetts, Elizabeth Warren. Warren had attempted to read a letter written by the civil rights activist, Coretta Scott King, during a debate in the Upper House on the appointment of the Republican senator Jeff Sessions as attorney general. King had written the letter in 1986 in opposition to Sessions' then failed judicial nomination, expressing her view that Sessions would act as federal prosecutor to "chill the free exercise of the vote by black citizens" (Our Foreign Staff 2017). Three decades later, Warren felt that King's warning needed to be heard again. This was regarded as a direct violation of the senate's rules against 'impugning the motives' of a senator and, when she continued after a caution from the House, Warren was barred from speaking for the remainder of the debate. McConnell rebuked Warren saying, "She was warned. She was given an explanation. Nevertheless, she persisted" (Our Foreign Staff 2017). It was the latter part of McConnell's statement that found cachet as a rallying call for female tenacity in the face of masculine conservativism, and this too inevitably found its way onto t-shirts, magnets, mugs and the like, so that just over a year later, there were 3,196 results on Etsy for 'nevertheless she persisted'. King's central part in this story (she is the reason for Warren's persistence, after all) is strikingly absent, however. At the time of searching, Etsy only produced 64 results for 'King' and even fewer results drew any connection between Warren and King (whether in their actual content or the metadata used to advertise their goods). One notable exception to this was a listing from the shop RobotsLoveDinosaurs that sold 'She persisted' on a button in a three pack along with 'Let Liz speak' and 'Hear Coretta's words'.

The issue with this is not with Warren herself or indeed her admirable persistence but the fact that it is a description of Warren, a white woman, by McConnell that becomes a popular shorthand for feminist resistance to Republican politics. Gabrielle Moss shares that reclaiming such phrases no longer inspired her to fight, though, but drowned her "in toxicity" (2017). She questions instead, where are the words from those most marginalized by the "racists, sexists, xenophobes, [and] homophobes" who seek to further reduce their rights:

> I wished that I could buy a shirt with Alice Walker's quote "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any" which was as sharp as the "Pussy Grabs Back" shirts. I wished it was as easy and simple to find out what the people who are putting their well-being – and in many cases, their lives – on the line to fight against the Trump administration were saying as it was to find out what new, terrible, degrading thing a man had said to a woman who didn't deserve it. (Moss 2017)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Moss's imagined Walker t-shirt *does* exist online – and even on Etsy – along with a number of other Walker-based items. But tellingly, these listings were in the hundreds rather than thousands. Browsing for Walker as opposed to Shakespeare or Warren was, moreover, the only time I encountered adverts that featured black models. The hands which are often featured in listings, photographed cradling jewellery or other such handcrafted items, are overwhelmingly white. Such a degree of racial erasure and lack of representation remains uncommented on, however, because craft is "perhaps protected discursively" on account of its links with wider practices with an "ethical or at least progressive sensibility" (Luckman 2015, 7) such as buying organic or up-cycling. Etsy's slogan may be '#DifferenceMakesUs' but the salient difference is, importantly, not one of diversity in class or of race among its makers but of variance from a commercial norm: handmade versus machine-made; individually sourced and designed versus sweat-shop produced. Even this distinction should be taken with a pinch of salt. This is not to undermine the potential ethical benefit of shopping through small businesses as opposed to transnational corporations, but we need a recognition that, as Luckman argues, the consumption of craft goods is "part of a set of ethical and self-aware middle-class purchasing behaviours". These are "*niche* lifestyles" [emphasis added], open only to those who can afford them (Luckman 2015, 25). And this is one of the new digital landscapes that Shakespeare has colonised. Shakespeare's presence and popularity on websites such as Etsy appears as an extension of the capital he possesses in 'IRL' or, in real life. His commodification in the form of Shakescraft reifies the assumption, whether correct or not, that the enjoyment of Shakespeare is the exclusive preserve of the white, educated middle and upper-middle classes.

Bibliography

"About Etsy" n.d. = "About Etsy". URL https://www.etsy.com/about (2019-03-06).

Braithwaite, Ann (2002). "The Personal, the Political, Third-Wave and Postfeminisms". *Feminist Theory*, 3(3), 335-44. DOI https://doi.org/10.1177/146470002762492033.

Cartner-Morley, Jess (2016). "Maria Grazia Chiuri's Dior Debut Spells Out Her Feminist Message". *Guardian*. URL https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2016/sep/30/maria-grazia-chiuri-christian-dior-debut-feminist-message-paris-fashion-week (2019-03-06).

Dawkins, Nicole (2011). "Do-It-Yourself: The Precarious Work and Postfeminist Politics of Handmaking (in) Detroit". *Utopian Studies*, 22(2), 261-84. DOI https://doi.org/10.5325/utopianstudies.22.2.0261.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Findlay, Alison (2014). *Women in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*. London: Arden. URL https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/women-in-shakespeare-9781472557513/ (2019-03-06).

Frye, Susan (2010). *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812206982.

Harvey, David (2007). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Holderness, Graham; Loughrey, Bryan (2016). "Ales, Beers, Shakespeares". Shellard, Dominic; Keenan, Siobhan (eds), *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-first Century*. London: Palgrave, 99-125. DOI https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-58316-1_6.

Iyengar, Sujata (2014). "Upcycling Shakespeare: Crafting Cultural Capital". Fischlin, Daniel (ed.), *OuterSpeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia and the Limits of Adaptation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 347-71. DOI https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442669369-013.

Luckman, Susan (2015). *Craft and the Creative Economy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137399687.

McRobbie, Angela (2004). "Making a Living in London's Small-scale Creative Sector". Power, Dominic; Scott, Allen J. (eds), *Cultural Industries and the Production of Culture*. Abingdon: Routledge, 130-44. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203392263_chapter_8.

Mitchell, Victoria (ed.) (2000). *Selvedges: Writings and Artworks since 1980*. Norwich: Norwich Gallery.

Mosle, Sara (2009). "Etsy.com Peddles a False Feminist Fantasy". *Double X*. URL http://www.doublex.com/section/work/etsycom-peddles-false-feminist-fantasy (2018-11-23).

Morris, Lucy (2017). "Calling Bullshit on (Dior's) Feminist Slogan Tees'. *Grazia*. URL https://graziadaily.co.uk/fashion/news/dior-feminist-slogan-spring-summer-2018/ (2019-03-06).

Moss, Gabrielle. 2017. "The Big Problem With Using 'Nevertheless, She Persisted' As A Feminist Rallying Cry" . *Bustle*. URL https://www.bustle.com/p/the-big-problem-with-using-nevertheless-she-persisted-as-a-feminist-rallying-cry-36631 (2019-03-06).

Muscoffo (2015). "Etsy". *Urban Dictionary*. URL https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Etsy (2019-03-06).

Nochlin, Linda (2018). *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays*. Abingdon: Routledge. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429502996.

Our Foreign Staff (2017). "Elizabeth Warren Silenced for Reading Coretta Scott King Letter in Senate Debate on Jeff Sessions". *The Telegraph*. URL https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/08/warren-violates-arcane-rule-coretta-scott-king-quote-sparking/ (2019-03-06).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

"Our Story" n.d. = "Our Story". *The Pussyhat Project*. URL `https://www.pussyhatproject.com/our-story/` (2019-03-06).

Reed, Sam; and Moore, Ben (2017). "Prabal Gurung Explains his NYFW Feminist Finale". *Hollywood Reporter*. URL `https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/prabal-gurung-explains-his-nyfw-feminist-finale-975447` (2019-03-06).

Shakespeare, William (1988). *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Edited by Harold F. Brooks. London: Methuen.

Shakespeare, William (1995a). *Henry V (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by T.W. Craik. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (1995b). *Titus Andronicus (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by Jonathan Bate. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (1998). *Julius Caesar (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by David Daniell. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2000). *King Henry VIII (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by Gordon McMullan. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2001). *Othello (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by E.A.J Honigmann. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2006). As You Like It (Arden Shakespeare). Edited by Juliet Dusinberre. London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2010). *The Taming of the Shrew (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by Barbara Hodgdon. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2011a). *Coriolanus (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by Peter Holland. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2011b). *The Tempest (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Shakespeare, William (2014). *Hamlet (Arden Shakespeare)*. Edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor. London; New York: Bloomsbury.

Tanya (2018). "Review". Etsy. Online. URL https://etsy.me/2DBzVkJ (2018-11-23).

"The Art and Craft of Business" 2014 = "The Art and Craft of Business: Artisanal Capitalism". *The Economist*, 410, 8868.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Narrative Suspense in Edgar Allan Poe and Alfred Hitchcock

Elaine Indrusiak
(Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil)

Abstract This article explores the construction of narrative suspense in Edgar Allan Poe's and Alfred Hitchcock's works. Central to their creations is a dual narrative structure that builds tension by articulating two stories in one. Narratological analyses of Poe's tales and of Hitchcock's thrillers indicate that their suspense does not stem from gothic *topoi*, but from plots skilfully wrought to manipulate the readers/viewers' attention. The first part of the article introduces the concept of narrative suspense. Next, structural principles defended by Poe and Hitchcock are presented. The last two parts discuss narrative techniques in the works by both authors. Given the authors' influence within their respective media, the analysis has implications for studies of the short story and of the suspense thriller as a narrative genre.

Keywords Edgar Allan Poe. Alfred Hitchcock. Narrative suspense. Short story. Gothic stories.

1 Double Articulation: the Core of the Short Story and of Narrative Suspense

As with most mental states, suspense is difficult to define, being usually associated to uncertainty, expectation, apprehension and anxiety. The etymological meaning of the word points to interruption, to the idea of 'being suspended'; therefore the art of suspenseful storytelling demands more than mysteries that play solely on people's curiosity – it requires a skilful manipulation of the reader/viewer for the arousal of lingering sensations and impressions. Alfred Hitchcock has long been appointed 'master of the suspense', and affinities between his work and Edgar Allan Poe's tales have fed numerous critical commentaries and scholarly works of varying depths and lengths.[1] Poe and Hitchcock are at the centre of any contem-

1 For a thorough list of studies on the Poe/Hitchcock connection, see Perry 1996 and Perry 2003.

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/003
Submitted: 2018-10-01 | Accepted: 2018-12-13

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

porary conception of the suspense, but while much attention has been paid to themes and imagery favoured by both artists, not much has been explored in terms of formal and structural characteristics that allow for 'suspension' to occur in their artworks. As detective Dupin demonstrates in *The Purloined Letter*,[2] one might say that the obviousness of the common contents in these celebrated artists' works might have clouded one's perception of narrative devices employed by both authors in creating suspense, one of the three narrative universals appointed by Meir Sternberg (1992). Drawing from Poe's and Hitchcock's texts, I intend to demonstrate the recurrence of a dual narrative structure in some of their works, one that is at the core of what I call 'narrative suspense', endorsing Ricardo Piglia's rationale in his "Theses on the Short Story" (2011).

In his essay, Piglia (63) proposes that a short story always tells two stories. Depending on the balance the author keeps between these two narrative lines and the tension it generates, tales fall into one of two categories, classic or contemporary short stories. Poe's formula sets the model for classic short stories: 'Story One' hides 'Story Two', which is told through allusions, fragments and ellipsis; when Story Two is finally revealed, the reader is surprised. The modern or contemporary short story, however, brings the two narrative lines to the fore without ever resolving the tension between them. Certainly, layers of significance may be found in all types of artistic texts, but these two narrative levels proposed by Piglia should not be mistaken for allegorical or metaphorical content; the enigma is simply a story told in a mysterious way. Therefore,

> [t]he strategy of the tale is placed at the service of that coded narration. How to tell a story while another is being told? This question synthesizes the technical problems of the short story. Second thesis: the secret story is the key to the form of the short story [...]. The classic short story à la Poe told a story while announcing that there was another; the modern short story tells two stories as if they were one. Hemingway's 'iceberg theory' is the first synthesis of that process of transformation: the most important thing is never recounted. The secret story is constructed out of what is not said, out of implication and allusion. (64-5)

Though only an investigative tour de force would allow us to determine the applicability of Piglia's theses to the whole genre of literary short stories, his exemplification renders the theses plausible and draws attention to a narrative structure recurrently implemented by the writers he analyses. Moreover, when it comes to Poe's case, not only do Piglia's theses shed

2 All references to works by Poe are taken from G.R. Thompson's 2004 edition of *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe* (Poe 2004).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

light on the writer's fictional texts, but they also complement his highly influential critical work, the foundation of the 'theory of the effect', a collection of principles drawn from his essay *The Philosophy of Composition*, published in 1846, and from some of his literary reviews. According to Charles May, though the short story has considerably evolved due to contributions from Piglia's 'modern' writers and their followers, Poe's influence cannot be overestimated, because

> [s]ince no theory of the short prose tale had been developed when Poe was writing, he borrowed theoretical ideas from those genres that did possess a critical history, such as drama and poetry, and applied them to the gothic tale form that was popular during his time. The following generic elements are the most important ones Poe made use of: (1) the conventionalized and ritualized structure of the drama; (2) the metaphoric and self-contained unity of the lyric poem; (3) the technique of verisimilitude of the eighteenth-century novel; (4) the point of view and unifying tone of the eighteenth-century essay; and (5) the spiritual undercurrent and projective technique of the old romance and the gothic story. When you add to these the notion of prose assuming the spatial form of painting, which Poe suggested in the 1842 Hawthorne review, you have the basis for a new generic form. (May 1994, 14)

Given Poe's relevance to the Western tradition of short stories, his use of narrative suspense, i.e. the twofold narrative structure identified by Piglia, may have influenced countless writers both directly and indirectly, since literary texts are known to establish intertextual relations regardless of authorial intention. Likewise, many storytellers who favour other genres or other media may have been equally inspired by Poe, whether by reading his own work or those by authors who have incorporated his narrative techniques. As I intend to demonstrate in what follows, Hitchcock is one of such cases.

2 Poe and Hitchcock: Masters of Reader/Viewer Manipulation

Tracing influences does not necessarily call for an inspection of one's library, but when a filmmaker of the early days of cinema confesses to having been an avid reader of, and to having been deeply touched by a writer's biography and fictional work, the likelihood of direct influence grows exponentially. Even though Alfred Hitchcock never adapted a text by Poe, affinities between their works were pointed out in some of the earliest critical accounts to the filmmaker's oeuvre. Hitchcock himself acknowledged the similarities between his work and Poe's. Yet, despite confessing his admiration for the writer's works, in the essay *Why I'm Afraid of the*

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Dark he downplays the influence appointed by critics on the grounds that Poe was a Romantic *poète maudit*, while he was a contemporary commercial filmmaker. Anyone vaguely familiarised with intermedia studies and with the romantic undertones of contemporary culture will soon realise how unsubstantial Hitchcock's argumentation was.

Hitchcock's incapacity to perceive the extent and depth of Poe's influence might be either a classic symptom of "anxiety of influence" (Bloom 1973) or a natural consequence of readings focused on what Poe wrote *about* rather than on *how* he did it. If Hitchcock's knowledge of Poe's work was restricted to his fiction, then the limitation is quite understandable; had he read Poe's critical works, however, he would have found great affinities with his own ideas. In his celebrated interview to François Truffaut, Hitchcock stated:

> You know that the public always likes to be one jump ahead of the story; they like to feel they know what's coming next. So you deliberately play upon this fact to control their thoughts. (Truffaut 1985, 269)

In 1842, however, Poe had already defended that same degree of authorial control in his "Review of Twice-Told Tales and Mosses from an Old Manse":

> In the brief tale [...] the author is enabled to carry out his full design without interruption. During the hour of perusal, the soul of the reader is at the writer's control. (Poe 2004, 692)

Unlike Hitchcock, Poe did not have a Truffaut to elicit and praise his skills in storytelling and reader manipulation. Appreciated by French critics for his symbolism and popular among worldwide fans of horror stories, Poe's recognition has hardly been that of a narrative genius. Despite recent efforts by scholars such as Benfey (1993), Peeples (2002) and Zimmerman (2005) in proposing thorough form and structure-oriented readings of Poe's fictional prose, for several reasons (see Peeples 2004, ch. 3) it seems it will take a while to undo the damages of so many reviews and studies that have reinforced Aldous Huxley's opinion that

> [t]he substance of Poe is refined; it is his form that is vulgar. He is, as it were, one of Nature's Gentlemen, unhappily cursed with incorrigible bad taste. To the most sensitive and high-souled man in the world we should find it hard to forgive, shall we say, the wearing of a diamond ring on every finger. Poe does the equivalent of this in his poetry; we notice the solicism and shudder [...]. It is when Poe tries to make it too poetical that his poetry takes on its peculiar tinge of badness. (quoted in Peeples 2004, 64)

In the essay *From Poe to Valéry*, T.S. Eliot, another form-oriented and highly demanding critic, seems to agree with Huxley. Yet, by examining

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Poe's works through the eyes of his French enthusiasts, Eliot notices a much more elaborate poetics emerge not only from Poe's poems, but also from his prose fiction and criticism, concluding that *The Philosophy of Composition* "has not been taken so seriously as it deserves" (Eliot 1949, 333). Though Eliot states that Poe's most famous essay delineates a method for poetic creation that, if properly applied, should have resulted in a far more sophisticated product than *The Raven* (which the author of *The Waste Land* does not regard as a "thoroughly good job", 331), he still believes the text to be a gateway to the understanding not only of Poe's principles and techniques, but also of those poets who may have perfected them under his influence. After all,

> [n]o poet, when he writes his own art poétique, should hope to do much more than explain, rationalise, defend or prepare the way for his own practice: that is, for writing his own kind of poetry. He may think that he is establishing laws for all poetry; but what he has to say that is worth saying has its immediate relation to the way in which he himself writes or wants to write: though it may well be equally valid to his immediate juniors, and extremely helpful to them. We are only safe in finding, in his writing about poetry, principles valid for any poetry, so long as we check what he says by the kind of poetry he writes. (Eliot 1949, 333-4)

It is interesting to note that, though he dislikes Poe's literary accomplishments, Eliot is aware of the incomplete reading English-speaking critics had of his oeuvre. Richard Wilbur, on the other hand, not only celebrates Poe's style, but urges for a closer reading of his prose fiction, a significant shift from previous form-oriented criticism, which favoured Poe's poetry. Without disputing over some of the difficulties posed by Poe's "fruitcake style", Wilbur states that

> [w]e must give Poe the trustful attention that we're used to giving John Donne – we were all told in school to read John Donne very carefully. Nobody said that we should do that with Poe. I think that if he's read word by word, he turns out, at his best, to be a very rich and intentional writer. (Wilbur, Cantalupo 2003, 79)

Perhaps the best way to learn how to read Poe more carefully is to follow Eliot's advice and go back to *The Philosophy of Composition* and Poe's other influential critical texts. Being an analysis of the methodic creation of a poem, *The Philosophy of Composition* does not offer much guidance in terms of narrative construction to a prospective short story writer. Apart from defending brevity at all costs as well as a careful choice of words that mean and sound in accordance with a pre-designed final effect, the text does not explore many structural aspects, such as narrative voice, focalisa-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

tion, order of events and manipulation of time. However, if we apply Poe's defence of and search for *le mot juste* to some of his best accomplishments in fictional prose, we may find not only mathematically designed plots, but the repetition of narrative devices and structures. In other words, a careful analysis of Poe's oeuvre points to a narrative formula, and before deeming this statement as derogatory, one should keep in mind that not all recipes are simple and easy to follow. Besides, as DeLoy Simper puts it, Poe's critical writing provides solid "argument for conscious and planned artistry" (1975, 228) as well as theoretical principles that suggest parallels with Hitchcock's method of film-making.

It is no secret that many of Poe's tales and poems revolve around a somewhat limited number of themes and motifs found in *The Raven* and appointed by the poet as the most suitable to bring about the effect of "intense and pure elevation of the soul" (Poe 2004, 678). It is also a well-known fact that he rewrote many of his short stories, publishing alternative versions of the same texts in different magazines. Though one might speculate that such alterations and republishing of previous stories were made so as to lessen the poet's dire financial situation, it is quite likely that the prolific writer and editor would obsessively revise his work in order to attain that which Simper named "the well-wrought effect" (1975, 226). That same obsessive attitude may be found behind Hitchcock's remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934, 1955), as well as in his frequent revisiting themes, motifs and narrative constructions of earlier films as a means to perfect and maximise the effect of his narratives on the public. Again, allusions to this common feature may be found in many passages of both artists' critical works. Hitchcock, for instance, claimed to be

> against virtuosity for its own sake. Technique should enrich the action. One doesn't set the camera at a certain angle just because the cameraman happens to be enthusiastic about that spot. The only thing that matters is whether the installation of the camera at a given angle is going to give the scene its maximum impact. The beauty of image and movement, the rhythm and the effects – everything must be subordinated to the purpose […]. My main satisfaction is that the film had an effect on the audiences, and I consider that very important. I don't care about the subject matter; I don't care about the acting; but I do care about the pieces of film and the photography and the sound track and all of the technical ingredients that made the audience scream. I feel it's tremendously satisfying for us to be able to use the cinematic art to achieve something of a mass emotion. (Truffaut 1985, 103 and 282)

Such statements verge on uncanniness when compared to Poe's own synthesis of a theory of the effect:

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents – he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. (Poe 2004, 647)

Hitchcock's identification with Poe's ideas was such that even in pondering about the affinities between films and literature, he believed the short story to be the genre most akin to his cinema, a revelation made back in 1941 in an interview to Beth Twiggar:

> To my mind the nearest parallel to the feature motion picture as an art form is neither theater nor the novel but the short story. In a play there are intermissions. There are lapses of minutes to weeks in the reading of a novel. But short stories and films are taken in all at one sitting. There are no breaks to give the audience digestion time. The plot in both cases must spin directly to a climax, and speed is essential to directness. Implicit, indeed. So the short story and the screen play have unity and speed in common, and one thing more – each, in my opinion, requires a twist ending. (Twiggar 2015, 62)

Therefore, Hitchcock's own words indicate his adherence to a 'cinematic theory of the effect'. Moreover, as I will demonstrate, his concept of suspense, the very foundation of his work, is aligned to Meir Sternberg's functional approach and mirrors Poe's narrative techniques, particularly the dual narrative structure identified by Piglia.

3 Narrative Suspense in Poe's Gothic Stories

Before moving into a more detailed account of Poe's narrative techniques, it should be noted that he did not make use of narrative suspense in all of his tales, since his oeuvre includes a variety of texts with different artistic goals. In fact, though different groupings have been proposed as a means to organise his texts, even a cursory analysis of his diverse fictional prose indicates three broad categories he explored with different stylistic re-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

sources and for different purposes: the tales of ratiocination, founders of detective literature; those of allegory and satire, usually aimed at social and literary criticism; and those generally regarded as the gothic tales. Of course, as most categories in literary studies, these are not clear-cut, hence 'contaminations' occur. Still, I believe this classification may help us identify more accurately which part of Poe's huge and diverse body of work deeply influenced Hitchcock's filmmaking. The first category is filled by the Dupin narratives and a few other stories revolving around puzzle or mystery solving, such as *The Gold-Bug*. The second comprises some of Poe's less popular pieces today, for our detachment from the context to which they wittingly point considerably impairs interpretation; examples of these would be *Loss of Breath*, *The Man That Was Used Up* and *King Pest*. However, irony being a marked trait of Poe's writing, hints of satire and allegories are often found in stories of the other two groups. Finally, the third category brings some of Poe's most popular works; it is precisely the one that has left its marks not only on Hitchcock's cinema, but in most Western short story writers. It is also in this group that we find the tales in which Poe most proficiently exercised the unity of effect defended in his own critical texts and the dual narrative structure identified by Piglia. Stories such as *The Black Cat*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *Ligeia* are grouped in this third category. These tales are usually called suspenseful, and the fact that they share gothic themes and atmosphere suggests that the appellation is related to these common traits.

However, what I intend to point out is precisely the fact that much of what has been said about Poe and about suspense stories is based on the fallacy that such texts are suspenseful *because* they play on readers' fears and superstitions. In fact, it is the narrative structure that creates tension, regardless of the nature of the events. This fallacy arises from the fact that the word 'suspense' does not belong exclusively to the field of narrative studies. It is often used as a near synonym to mystery, thriller and horror, especially in film categorization. Part of this misnaming may be attributed to the indeterminacy of the state of mind associated to suspense, as previously referred. In addition to that, the cultural industry often exploits this near synonymy in marketing works that manipulate audiences' curiosity, fears, taboos and superstitions, a practice that further blurs lines between these (possibly) separate genres.

In order to avoid such imprecision, I propose to use the phrase 'narrative suspense' that stresses the intrinsically structural nature of Poe's and Hitchcock's take on the genre. Similarly, Meir Sternberg (1992) raises 'suspense' to the category of a narrative universal, while differentiating it from surprise and curiosity, the other two master roles of narrative texts, according to his functional theory of narrative. Certainly, choices of theme may add tension to suspense narratives, but anyone who has already come across a poorly built horror story knows that the impact of a text depends

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

more on *how* the story is told than on *what* it tells. The fact that macabre predicaments also appear in some of Poe's allegorical tales is an indication that theme alone does not build suspense. As Poe points out in *The Philosophy of Composition*, tone is of paramount importance in building an effect; even ordinary incidents may be used to build extraordinary effects if the proper tone is applied. Conversely, the most gruesome incidents may be rendered as casual and amusing if told in a tongue-in-cheek tone, an exercise repeatedly made by Hitchcock and his collaborators in the TV series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and in the theatrical trailers of his feature films, for example. Unlike poems, however, short stories and films establish their tones by means of structural features other than those appointed by Poe as crucial to the effect in *The Raven*. Therefore, in attempting to investigate how suspense is created in narratives, narratological analyses may help reveal the strategies used to create the indispensable tense tone as well as to manipulate reader/viewer response.

As previously mentioned, a closer reading of Poe's works reveals recurrent narrative traits, particularly in the gothic tales. In his analysis of *The Cask of Amontillado*, James Phelan (2007) emphasises the rhetorical nature of Poe's narrative, a trait found all over his oeuvre. Poe's narrators are textbook examples of unreliability ranging from fallibility to outright untrustworthiness (on 'unreliability' see Olson 2003). In their "purposive communicative acts" these narrators tell or write down events their excited minds claim to recollect as having involved them, often addressing an external narratee in attempts to prove their sanity, and make sense of puzzling incidents or "unburden their tormented souls" (Phelan 2007, 203). Being memories, these stories are mostly told in homodiegetic analepses and with a skilful manipulation of time that subtly switches between acceleration and deceleration, and forces the reader to focus on those events that the narrator's partial or biased judgment deems most relevant but that may blur, cloud or distort an otherwise perfectly logical and banal sequence of events, a fact at times pointed out or hinted at by the narrators themselves:

> Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-place — some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive, in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects. (Poe 2004, 349)

Associated to the use of gothic *topoi* that play on people's superstitions and fears, the narrative construction translates a feverish mind's take on reality. Surely, the events in *The Black Cat* would still sound fantastic if the cats in the story were white, but external focalisation would probably convert the seemingly supernatural story into a tragic yet all too plausible

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

account of a man who tortures all those who love him (and himself) once he realises he has become corrupt and degraded, i.e. a person who does not deserve love and should be severely punished (which will not happen unless his crimes go beyond simply torturing and killing *cats*). Therefore, it is the narrative structure of the tale, particularly its fixed focalisation, that creates tension and puzzles readers, not the nature of the events told. The effect obtained during "the hour of perusal", then, is a crescendo of tension over perfectly ordinary occurrences, not the sudden revelation of something fantastic or supernatural, a narrative construction that matches Hitchcock's amusing yet accurate definition of suspense:

> There is a distinct difference between 'suspense' and 'surprise', and yet many pictures continually confuse the two. I'll explain what I mean. We are now having a very innocent little chat. Let us suppose that there is a bomb underneath this table between us. Nothing happens, and then all of a sudden, "Boom!" There is an explosion. The public is *surprised*, but prior to this surprise, it has seen an absolutely ordinary scene, of no special consequence. Now, let us take a *suspense* situation. The bomb is underneath the table and the public *knows* it, probably because they have seen the anarchist place it there. The public is *aware* that the bomb is going to explode at one o'clock and there is a clock in the decor. The public can see that it is a quarter to one. In these conditions this same innocuous conversation becomes fascinating because the public is participating in the scene. The audience is longing to warn the characters on the screen: "You shouldn't be talking about such trivial matters. There's a bomb beneath you and it's about to explode!" In the first case we have given the public fifteen seconds of *surprise* at the moment of the explosion. In the second we have provided them with fifteen minutes of *suspense*. (Truffaut 1985, 73; italics in the original)

It seems quite clear, then, that the two masters of narrative manipulation shared the same ideas concerning the nature of suspense and how to obtain it: you tell one story while another is being told, and you manipulate your reader/viewer by alternating facts from those two story lines and by playing with narrative time, expanding unimportant passages to build tension and accelerating those events that, given proper attention, might reveal too much of the second story before it is time to bring it up. Therefore, the core of the short story as proposed by Piglia lays the foundation for the narrative suspense practiced by Poe and Hitchcock.

According to Louise Kaplan (1993, 46), Poe's fiction is highly deceptive, for the writer believed that imaginative literature worthy of that name hides its deepest meaning in an *under*current. As a result, the text itself becomes a puzzle to be assembled by the initiated reader. At surface level, the narrator controls the reader's focus, imposes his point of view and

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

suggests cause-effect relationships between events that may seem to be simple coincidences. He also reports his feelings and impressions as facts, which are rarely counter-balanced by those of other characters and thus become misleading forewarnings. In short, he manipulates the reader into acknowledging the extraordinary nature of those events told by his traumatised, deranged or intoxicated mind. At a deeper level, however, clues indicate another story line running parallel, one that often contradicts the narrator's impressions, providing a far more rational and plausible view of the events narrated. By pulling this secondary thread, these clues make emerge a completely different understanding of the tale. Since there are no switches in the narrative voice, the clues are provided by the narrators themselves, either unintentionally – such as in the exacerbated tone of some passages, which result slightly ludicrous, therefore unbelievable – or in their honest attempt to grasp reality beyond their altered mental states, such as in occasional and brief switches in focalisation to comment on other character's actions and reactions.

As in *The Black Cat*, also the narrator of *The Tell-Tale Heart* gives us clues about his motives for committing his crime: he says he is not mad but admits he has a disease that has sharpened his senses, especially hearing; he claims to *know* what the old man feels when awaken by noises, he knows his victim hears the death watches inside the walls, and, above all, he loves the old man but cannot stand the sight of his blind eye. Greta Olson argues that the paradoxical nature of the events in the story forces the reader to choose "the therapeutic strategy of reading against the grain" (Olson 2003, 103) by attributing mental instability and a pathological untrustworthiness to the source of the narration. Yet why would readers be so quick to judge this narrator? Why would they simply disregard, in the very first paragraph of the text, the narrator's claim to sanity? Perhaps most readers would do so simply because this is a Poe story of the gothic type, one that is usually accompanied by a paratext that points to the supernatural, the abnormal and the gruesome.

However, Poe's masterful use of the dual narrative structure constantly poses an invitation to decode or decipher a peculiar sequence of events (Benfey 1993, 27). Everything that seems obvious or clear in his writings should be taken with a grain of salt. That which is easily grasped in his tales constitutes what Piglia names "story one" and it usually comprises the supernatural, fantastic and horrid elements. But the experienced Poe reader accepts the challenge to assemble the puzzle, to find 'story two' in the interstices of the conventional gothic story. In so doing, this detective-reader cannot afford to be quick in assessing the narrator's (un)reliability. It is quite revealing what a reader finds in Poe once s/he neutralises the paratext and all the assumptions one tends to project on tales said to be only gothic. In the case of *The Tell-Tale Heart*, by giving the narrator the benefit of the doubt, a whole new and far more reasonable story emerges.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Would it not be plausible that, like the old man, the narrator also has had his hearing sharpened by increasing visual impairment, and the sight of his friend's condition both saddens and scares him, for it foreshadows his own future, making him *nervous*, as he claims to have been? Under these circumstances, the growing noise of the beetles inside the walls becomes unbearable, not only for their intensity but for the association the narrator has made with his terrible crime. Therefore madness may not be the cause of the crime, but it may turn out to be its consequence.

Plausible as it may be, this is just another possible reading of the short story, one that certainly does not override the (many) previous and equally reasonable ones, such as Alber, Iversen, Nielsen, and Richardson's revealing 'unnatural' approach (2010). So much dissent about a seemingly simple tale only reinforces Piglia's theses, for no one questions what the narrator tells at surface level, as fantastic as that may be, nor there seems to be much variance in the interpretations of this 'story one'. What generates so much curiosity and probing is that which is not clearly stated, but which is implied and alluded to throughout the narrative by several scattered clues that can only be detected in the attentive reading Wilbur (2003) urges for. These clues are pieces of a puzzle that, once assembled, reconfigures the whole text or, as Hemingway (1971) would put it, reveals the actual size of the iceberg.

4 Hitchcock's Classic and Contemporary Narrative Suspense

Added to the catalogue of similarities between Poe's and Hitchcock's works and opinions, the British director's cinema relies heavily on puzzles, a fact that earned him some bad reviews before his reputation as an auteur was established.[3] As Thomas Leitch (1991) demonstrates, Hitchcock's games were not only frequent but also diverse, ranging from 'find the director' and other uses of his own filmic persona to a complex and striking deconstruction of generic conventions. As in most good tricks, there is more than meets the eye behind those gimmicks. A close reading of Hitchcock's films reveals some of these games to be strategies at the service of narrative suspense, in other words, the same dual narrative structure Piglia finds at the core of the short story. In addition to that, a diachronic perspective allows us to notice the evolution of the director's mastery over this technique. A skilled adapter, Hitchcock chose to shift from theatrical sources to prose fiction quite early in his career (Leitch 2011, 13). This shift from dramatic to narrative sources corresponds to the director's identification

3 It is an interesting coincidence that both Poe and Hitchcock had to be acclaimed by French critics and artists to earn recognition in America.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

with the thriller as his signature genre, a defining moment for his authorial voice and his narrative style. *The Lodger* (1927) has been regarded by critics and by Hitchcock himself as the first truly Hitchcockian film. Though it brings in many of the themes the director would recurrently explore later in his career, it is in narrative technique that it really innovates. According to William Rothman (2012, 7), *The Lodger* establishes Hitchcock's identity both thematically and stylistically with ingenious and intricate uses of découpage, the trademark of his filmic writing. Already in this early silent masterpiece Hitchcock exercises his skills in narrative suspense and public manipulation:

> *The Lodger* is the model for the self-conscious Hitchcock narrative that acknowledges its own indirectness and its practice of withholding information. In it, the author's relationship with the viewers comes to the fore. The film's story about its lodger is also a story about the camera; the camera's presentation of the lodger is also its presentation of itself. […] *The Lodger* is also not a conventional detective story. We cannot glean the lodger's secret by careful attention to clues strewn about the narrative. The author has planted clues to the lodger's mysterious nature, but they do not allow us to deduce his story; all they reveal is how well Hitchcock keeps a secret. (Rothman 2012, 17)

Like Poe's narrators, Hitchcock's camera calls attention to itself, to its points of view and, at times, to its own unreliability, as in the famous 'false flashback' scene in *Stage Fright*. This "double dealing game", as David Richter puts it (2005), was received as a cheat by the film's original audience, but it seems to have been domesticated by contemporary viewers, who seem to have grown accustomed to deceitful narratives. The director's camera-narrator tells us where and when to direct our gaze, but its motivations in so doing are never quite explicit. By presuming that consciously made narrative options are simply 'natural' ways of telling a story, viewers often miss the second story line the author keeps subtly pointing to. In *Rear Window*, for example, the busybody camera gives us a glimpse of the neighbourhood and then pans over Jefferies's apartment to tell us what is happening *in* there. It is only after Jeff is awake, fearful of the inevitable next steps of his love life, that the camera sympathises with his point of view, focusing on the bored and eventually tragic married life of the Thorwalds rather than on beautiful Miss Torso, a much more plausible object of voyeuristic observation not only for her physical attributes, but also for the position of her windows, right across from Jefferies's own. The fact that the camera can and does move outside the apartment yet chooses to remain inside, next to Jefferies, for most of the film is clear indication that it has another agenda, one that goes beyond solving the mystery around Mrs. Thorwald. Its motivations become clear

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

when it decides to close the narrative by showing us a very comfortable Lisa Fremont switch her reading from *Beyond the High Himalayas* to a *Harper's Bazaar* issue while Jefferies sleeps, a perfect visual synthesis of the development she had throughout the story right before Jefferies's sceptical eyes. It is this insistence of the camera that remains close to the events of its interest, rather than following Thorwald and solving the murder case once and for all, that significantly enhances the tension between the two stories and creates suspense out of what would otherwise be a much simpler mystery film.

The same pattern may be observed in many other Hitchcock's films, with varying degrees of success. Like *The Lodger* and *Rear Window*, *The Wrong Man*, *Psycho*, *The Birds* and *Vertigo* also deal with the technical difficulties of telling two stories in one, many times resorting to a filmic equivalent to Poe's fixed focalisation, which results in a biased or partial account of events. However, not all of Hitchcock's suspense films display Poe's 'classic' formula. *The Birds*, for example, follows the same narrative scheme identified by Piglia in contemporary short stories, in which the two stories are told simultaneously and the tension between them remains unresolved. Though Hitchcock did not explicitly address this aspect of a dual narrative creating suspense, in his discussions about filmmaking, he certainly hinted at it when he defended the use of the so-called 'MacGuffin', a narrative gimmick employed to divert the viewer's attention from the development of the second story line:

> when he told me how idiotic he had thought our gimmick was, I answered, "Well, all it goes to show is that you were wrong to attach any importance to the MacGuffin. *Notorious* was simply the story of a man in love with a girl who, in the course of her official duties, had to go to bed with another man and even had to marry him. That's the story". (Truffaut 1985, 168-9)

In *The Birds*, the MacGuffin is raised to the status of protagonist, lending its name to the film. However, despite the title, that which the narrator keeps pointing to is not the story of the birds and why they became aggressive; it is the story of a woman who falls in love with a man and manages not only to win his heart, but also that of his jealous mother under extraordinary circumstances. As in Poe, Hitchcock's 'second stories' are seldom quite as thrilling as the superficial ones (how can reality compete with fancy?). Yet, according to Julio Cortázar, "even a stone is interesting when it is the object of a Henry James or a Franz Kafka" (1993, 152) – and of a Poe and a Hitchcock, I would add. Numerous interpretations have been proposed to both the *The Birds* and "the Birds", as stated by the title of Morris's article (2000), and, like those different readings of Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*, many of them are appropriate. Unlike Poe's tale, however,

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the enigma of the film does not lie in the second story, but in the first one, the story at surface level and blatantly referred to in the title, but never fully explained or concluded. With a nightmarish yet at times humorous tone, Hitchcock creates gripping suspense out of an unlikely situation whose absurdity is remarked by the very characters in the story and gets away with a jaw-dropping open ending after having bolted viewers to their seats for over two minutes of 'ristle-tee, rostle-tee, now, now, now', a highly effective adaptation of Poe's manipulation of narrative time. Hitchcock's boldness in allowing the open ending of his film indicates that he departs from Poe's classic style of narrative suspense to experiment with more modern and subtle narrative constructions in which tension is built and never released with a surprising denouement. Though one might believe this to be a sign of the director's maturity as a storyteller, the culmination of a long career, his interview to Truffaut reveals that the desire for a plot with unreleased tension had been in his head ever since the making of *The Lodger*:

> in a story of this kind I might have liked him to go off in the night, so that we would never really know for sure. But with the hero played by a big star, one can't do that. You have to clearly spell it out in big letters: "He is innocent". (Truffaut 1985, 43)

It is reasonable to conclude, then, that the forty-year span between Hitchcock's first wishes for open-endedness and its accomplishment do not stand for a switch in narrative orientation. It was the time it took him to become independent as director and producer of his own projects, therefore free to bend and play with Hollywood conventions. However, despite this freedom, Hitchcock, like Poe, always had the audience in mind, so his experimentalism was often curbed by a certain didacticism that ensured no viewers would be left behind in following his narratives. Though *The Birds* stands out among the director's films as his most overt violation of this general rule, the didactic touch may be found in his most celebrated masterpiece, *Psycho* (1960), where an 'ex-machina' psychiatrist explains Norman Bates's pathology in layman's terms. In the light of Piglia's theses, the function of the psychiatrist was to make sure the second story would be properly understood by audiences that, back in 1960, were not as used as we are to such abrupt, surprising and disturbing audiovisual revelations of Poesque doppelgangers. It should be noted, though, that this bit of didacticism, soothing as it may be to the average movie-goer, might be another double-edged Hitchcockian trick. As Rothman puts it,

> [i]n a Hitchcock film it is always a mistake, however, to assume the veracity of a psychiatrist's explanation. At the end of *Psycho*, for example, one assumes at one's peril that the psychiatrist gets it right, that it really

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

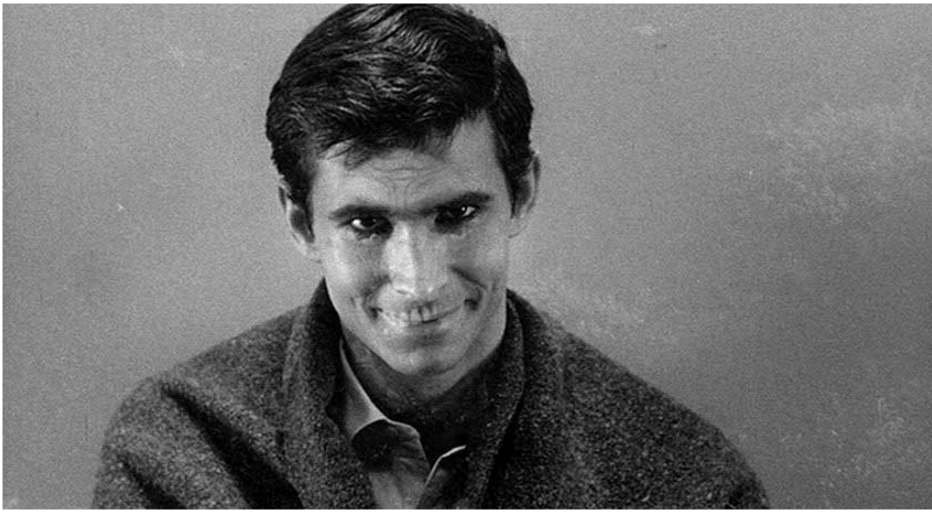


Figure 1. Norman and Mother superimposed in *Psycho*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. © Universal Pictures, USA, 1960

> is 'Mother', not Norman, who has filled him in on the situation; thus, we err if we simply take for granted that it is 'Mother' who is casting that villainous grin directly to the camera. (Rothman 2014, 125)

After all, why would a director so strongly committed to visual storytelling, a champion of formalist montage who reluctantly added sound to his films out of circumstantial impositions, append such an awkward scene in which the previous events, all masterfully *shown*, are explained verbally? If clarification is needed, why did he not provide it visually through a flashback sequence? Such a verbal supplement is perplexing in *Psycho*, which is a film completely controlled by Hitchcock, who would not have to make concessions to studio bureaucrats of the kind of the 'collage ending' added to *The Wrong Man* that (artificially) attenuates the tragedy of its protagonists, the Balestreros.[4] Yet, it is precisely Hitchcock's belief in the supremacy of the visual over the auditive in film narratives that suggests that behind the psychiatrist's verbal explanation there may be a totally different story, one that will not be told verbally, but which is definitely hinted at by the superimposition of Anthony Perkins' disturbing smile and 'Mother's' image.

4 Donald Spoto (1992, 257) states that the information that Rose Balestrero recovered after two years in the sanatorium and that the family moved to Florida, where they lived 'happily ever after' was false and was imposed on Hitchcock to attenuate the tragic ending, unbecoming in a commercial film. Hitchcock is said to have vehemently objected this interference, but to no avail.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

The impact of the visual image (fig. 1) undoes the reassuring tone of the medical explanation and of 'Mother's' statement that she "couldn't hurt a fly". The dissociation between visual and auditive tracks, a highly effective and clever trick used by Hitchcock in his very first 'talkie', *Blackmail* (1929) and perfected along his career, mirrors the dual narrative structure implemented to conceal the story of Bates's double personality, generating tension, a disquieting effect that lingers beyond the denouement. Like Poe's description of Ligeia, Hitchcock's visual account seems at odds with what is being told verbally, signalling to the attentive viewer that the detailed and realistic portrait hides much more than meets the eye.

5 Conclusions

Poe's and Hitchcock's systematic use of narrative suspense does not account for a new genre; it is only a strategy for building tense, twofold narrative structures. Though both authors perfected this strategy in stories of scary and mysterious nature, they also exercised it in works of much lighter tone, texts that do not address superstitious, unnatural or disturbing themes and images, demonstrating that narrative suspense neither depends on, nor derives from gothic *topoi*, but simply works beautifully when associated to them to instill fear and alarm. According to Ricardo Piglia, this strategy is at the core of the short story, both behind Poe's shocking and surprising denouements and Chekhov's impressionist fictional prose. Despite Hitchcock's attempts to downplay Poe's influence on his work, by building narrative suspense in his films, he approaches the structure of the short story and in so doing, approaches Poe. Similarly, narrative suspense in film is not restricted to Hitchcock's oeuvre. A list posted on the International Movie Database appointing "The best Hitchcockian movies not directed by Hitchcock" (2014)[5] gives us clear indication that the British director's narrative style has become central to the thriller, as central as Poe is to short-story theory, criticism, and practice. Therefore, many so-called Hitchcockian films might be also viewed as Poesque, for their use of narrative suspense as a strategy to balance narrative complexity and puzzling entertainment, an effort deeply rooted in the rich tradition of the short story, regardless of the presence of gothic *topoi*.

5 URL http://www.imdb.com/list/ls071418428/ (2019-02-20).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Bibliography

Alber, Jan et al (2010). "Unnatural Narratives, Unnatural Narratology: Beyond Mimetic Models". *Narrative*, 18(2), 113-36. DOI http://doi.org/10.1353/nar.0.0042.

Benfey, Christopher (1993). "Poe and the Unreadable: *The Black Cat* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*". Silverman, Kenneth (ed.), *New Essays on Poe's Major Tales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 27-44.

Bloom, Harold (1973). *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cortázar, Julio (1993). *Valise de Cronópio*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

Eliot, T.S. (1949). "From Poe to Valéry". *The Hudson Review*, 2(3), 327-42. DOI http://doi.org/10.2307/3847788.

Hemingway, Ernest (1971). *Death in the Afternoon*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hitchcock, Alfred (1997). "Why I'm Afraid of the Dark". Gotlieb, Sidney (ed.), *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 142-5.

Kaplan, Louise (1993). "The Perverse Strategy in 'The Fall of the House of Usher'". Silverman, Kenneth (ed.), *New Essays on Poe's Major Tales*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 45-64.

KyaBakwaasHai (2014). *Hitchcockian Movies: The Best Hitchcockian movies not Directed by Alfred Hitchcock*. URL http://www.imdb.com/list/ls071418428/ (2018-09-10).

Leitch, Thomas (1991). *Find the Director and Other Hitchcock Games*. Athens (USA): University of Georgia Press.

Leitch, Thomas (2011). "From Stage to Screen". Barton Palmer, Robert; Boyd, David (eds), *Hitchcock at the Source: The Author as Adaptor*. Albany (NY): SUNY Press, 11-32.

May, Charles (1994). *The New Short Story Theories*. Athens (US): Ohio University Press.

Morris, Christopher (2000). "Reading the Birds and *The Birds*". *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 28(4), 250-8. URL http://www.jstor.org/stable/43797000 (2019-02-20).

Olson, Greta (2003). "Reconsidering Unreliability: Fallible and Untrustworthy Narrators". *Narrative*, 11(1), 93-109. URLhttps://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2003.0001 (2019-02-20).

Peeples, Scott (2004). *The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe*. Rochester (NY): Camden House.

Peeples, Scott (2002). "Poe's 'Constructiveness' and *The Fall of the House of Usher*". Hayes, Kevin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 178-90. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521793262.012.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Perry, Dennis R. (1996). "Imps of the Perverse: Discovering the Poe/Hitchcock Connection". *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 24(4), 393-9. URL `http://www.jstor.org/stable/43796752` (2019-02-20).
Perry, Dennis R. (2003). *Hitchcock and Poe: The Legacy of Delight and Terror*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press.
Phelan, James (2007). "Rhetoric/ethics". Herman, David (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 203-16. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521856965.014`.
Piglia, Ricardo (2011). "Theses on the Short Story". *New Left Review*, 70. URL `https://newleftreview.org/II/70/ricardo-piglia-theses-on-the-short-story` (2019-02-20).
Poe, Edgar Allan (2004). *The Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*. Edited by G.R. Thompson. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
Richter, David (2005). "Your Cheatin' Art: Double Dealing in Cinematic Narrative". *Narrative*, 13(1), 11-28. DOI `http://doi.org/10.1353/nar.2005.0006`.
Rothman, William (2012). *Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze*. Albany (NY): SUNY Press.
Rothman, William (2014). *Must We Kill the Thing We Love? Emersonian Perfectionism and the Films of Alfred Hitchcock*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Simper, DeLoy (1975). "Poe, Hitchcock, and the Well-Wrought Effect". *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 3(3), 226-31. URL `http://www.jstor.org/stable/43795622` (2019-02-20).
Spoto, Donald (1992). *The Art of Alfred Hitckcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures*. New York: Anchor Books.
Sternberg, Meir (1992). "Telling in Time (II): Chronology, Teleology, Narrativity". *Poetics Today*, 13(3), 463-541. DOI `https://doi.org/10.2307/1772872`.
Truffaut, François (1985). *Hitchcock*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
Twiggar, Beth (2015). "Hitchcock, Master Maker of Mystery". Gotlieb, Sidney (ed.), *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews*, vol. 2. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 61-5.
Wilbur, Richard; Cantalupo, Barbara (2003). "Interview with Richard Wilbur". *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 4(1), 68-86. URL `http://www.jstor.org/stable/41506167` (2019-02-20).
Zimmerman, Brett (2005). *Edgar Allan Poe: Rhetoric and Style*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Cited Films

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1960] (1999). *Psycho*. Universal Pictures.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1963] (2000). *The Birds*. Alfred J. Hitchcock Productions, Universal Studios Home Video.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1958] (2001). *Vertigo*. Alfred J. Hitchcock Productions, Universal Studios.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1955] (2002). *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1950] (2004). *Stage Fright*. Warner Bros, Warner Home Video.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1956] (2004). *The Wrong Man*. Warner Bros., Warner Home Video.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1927] (2007). *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*. Gainsborough Pictures / Carlyle Blackwell Productions, Mill Creek Entertainment.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1954] (2008). *Rear Window*. Paramount Pictures, Universal Pictures.

Hitchcock, Alfred (dir.) [1929] (2014). *Blackmail*. British International Pictures; FilmRise.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Film Adaptation as the Art of Expansion
The Visual Poetics of Marleen Gorris' *Mrs. Dalloway*

Polina Rybina
(Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia)

Abstract This article discusses changes in central metaphors through which contemporary adaptation studies strive to chart the enormous territory of film adaptations that exists today. Previously concerned with privileging literary texts over their media 'replays', these 'new wave' studies tend to prioritize other aspects of the adaptation process: intertextual overwriting (Stam 2005), reappropriation of the literary past for the sake of the present (Sanders 2015), exploitation of literature (Cartmell 2017), etc. Departing from the metaphor of 'competition' between media (Jameson 2011), we suggest that the adaptation process be discussed as the art of expansion. The key issue in this research lies in bringing to the forefront the filmmaker's visual poetics and the place his/her adaptation has among other cinematic works of the same period. This article shows how Marleen Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) reveals its 'expansive' potential when read both through the lens of the heritage film style and the previous filmmaker's work, *Antonia's Line* (1995).

Keywords Film adaptation. Auteur adaptation. Visual poetics. Film adaptation effects. The heritage film. Woolf. Gorris. Mrs. Dalloway.

1 Introduction

Contemporary film adaptation studies have undergone considerable evolution and have been actively engaged in the discussion and reinterpretation of their central concerns and issues, and their controlling metaphors. Surprisingly, a number of earlier studies of film adaptations did not engage with their own central metaphors. For instance, George Bluestone, who pioneered systematic close reading of literary originals and their film versions, called his work *Novels Into Film* (1957), thus describing the process in a detailed way yet without striving to attain any conclusion about the concept of adaptation.[1] Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film* (1996) appears to have followed

1 More recently Bluestone introduced the metaphor of 'metamorphosis' (Bluestone 2003).

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/004
Submitted: 2018-09-20 | Accepted: 2018-11-02

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Bluestone's example by suggesting a purely narratological methodology for the analysis of filmic adaptations of literary texts. On the other hand, Joy G. Boyum, in her book *Double Exposure: Fiction Into Film* (Boyum 1985), introduced the influential and promising metaphor of 'double vision'. Boyum analysed the spectator's experience of watching a film adaptation, creating a balance between viewing and reading, looking back on literature and at the same time being subjected to the flow of audiovisual images.

A major change in adaptation studies occurred with the introduction of the intertextual approach and the idea of the continued 'overwriting' of previous works by new ones. This dialogic nature of adaptation, discussed, among others, by Robert Stam (2005) and Linda Hutcheon (2006), popularised the metaphor of 'palimpsest', which shows great explanatory potential for the field. Other important metaphors of 'appropriation' of the literary past for the sake of the filmic present (Sanders 2015) and the exploitation of literature on screen (Cartmell 2017) elaborate on this palimpsestic interplay of the filmic and the literary, the visual and the verbal.

There are other studies showing a different approach, among which stands out Simone Murray's attention to the cultural economy of film adaptation (2012). It marks a new turn in the discipline, replacing the textual and the viewer's response aspects of adaptation studies with the specificity of the adaptation industry and its players. The historic turn in film adaptation studies (as represented, for instance, by Greg Colón Semenza and Bob Hasenfratz) builds on Murray's results to demonstrate how film adaptations both emerge from film history and continue to shape it.

2 Adaptation Effects: Competition vs. Expansion

In his afterword to *True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity* (2011), Fredric Jameson offers an interesting interpretation of contemporary adaptation studies. He points out that, in adaptation discourse, the approach based on the fidelity to the original text has become extremely unpopular. This is partly due to the postmodern erasing the cultural hierarchies between the literary and the adapted/filmic. Indeed, although the most prominent scholars working in the adaptation field (Stam 2005; Cartmell 2017; Hutcheon 2006; Leitch 2009) have approached their objects of study from different angles, they essentially agree on what Jameson calls "Derridean vigilance" (Jameson 2011, 215) about the many forms difference takes in adaptations, 'celebrating' the multiple interpretations literary texts acquire through different media replays. 'Identity or difference' is, according to Jameson, the philosophical form of contemporary adaptation debates. He sees the necessity to accentuate the difference, even antagonism, among texts that are linked through their plots (as a novel

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

and its film adaptation, for example), but that belong to different media:

> This philosophical emphasis on antagonism and incompatibility does seem to me the most productive course to follow, allowing for an insistence on the material structure and constraints of the medium full. (Jameson 2011, 231)

Jameson also suggests that we should think about what happens in contemporary media in terms of the metaphor of 'competition'. Different media (film, literature, theatre, TV, video games, etc.) compete to gain attention of their imaginary audience. This leads Jameson to consider the concepts of 'antagonism' and 'incompatibility' of media, which in turn allow to focus on their material specificity that constitute both their potential and their limit. Jameson argues that this 'competition' is implicitly present in a number of cases,

> whenever a film pauses on a television monitor or a computer screen, whenever a television program projects a movie clip, or indeed when any of the visual media pause on the spectacle of someone reading a book. (232)

In order to grasp the 'competition' among media, Jameson suggests to apply Mihail Bakhtin's ideas on the specificity of the novel: the novel as a younger genre competes with older genres such as the epic, or tragedy. Jameson mentions Bakhtin's classic work *Epic and Novel: Towards a Methodology for the Study of the Novel* (Эпос и роман <О методологии исследования романа>, *1941*) and quotes a passage in which Bakhtin formulated a distinction between those genres that assume a finished quality and the 'unfinished' novel. The novel, according to Bakhtin, is at war with older genres: where it triumphs, the older genres go into decline. Jameson finds a similarity between the novel understood in this way, and a film adaptation that, in Jameson's interpretation (reformulating Bakhtin), "gets on poorly" (231) with literature as an older medium and fights with it. Jameson offers a picturesque allegory to highlight this idea:

> The novel, even when written for adaptation by film, necessarily wishes the latter's eclipse and death, and seeks to demonstrate the debility of a medium that has to rely on a literary 'original'. But at one and the same time film believes that its triumphant incorporation of the literary and linguistic hypotext into itself, in a generic cannibalism or anthropophagy, sufficiently enacts its primacy in the visual age. (232)

We note the aggressiveness of the metaphors here suggested ("generic cannibalism", "anthropophagy"). In contemporary criticism too adapta-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

tions are widely discussed through an aggressive vocabulary, partly due to the Neo-Marxist stance and terminology of scholars, e.g. 'exploitation' (used by Cartmell 2017), or 'appropriation' (used by Sanders 2015).[2]

In this article I shall employ the term 'art of expansion'. In my opinion, it is of utmost importance that a film adaptation be regarded as a way to expand the literary original through other media means and resources. To see an art of expansion in the practice of adaptation allows us to prioritise the filmmaker's visual poetics and media context over the imaginary responsibility ('fidelity') that any film adaptation owes to its literary progenitor. The idea of expansion also allows to glean one of the effects of film adaptation from Jameson's 'competition': the film must make the viewer feel that, behind any adaptation, a contest is taking place between media, that a film seeks to triumph over a novel, and a filmmaker over a literary classic.

It is particularly auteurist adaptations that aim to produce the effect of competition and rivalry with their literary sources. For this reason Jameson, elaborating the metaphor of competition, offers a detailed case study of Andrey Tarkovsky's adaptation of Stanisław Lem's *Solaris*. The film adaptations of Marleen Gorris (b. 1948) can be expected to produce the same kind of effect. Gorris is a Dutch film auteur with a radical visual imagination and strong feminist beliefs. However, in spite of undoubtedly auteurist tendencies in Gorris' approach to adaptation, our task here is to demonstrate that her work helps to elaborate a different view of contemporary adaptation practices – not *in competition with* literature, but as other media's *expansion of* literature.

Gorris, if we can presume to reconstruct her intention (although risking the 'intentional fallacy'), aims less at competition than at cooperation. Cooperation (unlike competition) as a practice inclines one to consider one's potential contribution to the already existing creative work, in this case Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Dramatising Woolf's text, Gorris expands it by way of two types of visual imagery. The first derives from the well-established tradition of the heritage film. The other is rooted in Gorris's auteurist style, her visual poetics. The meeting of the heritage film, Gorris's filmic style, and Woolf's literary text produce an effect called 'expansion'. Through the expansion of the literary by the filmmaker's sensibility and style new meanings grow, multiply, and become more complex. This is how the literary survives and grows: the 'original' substance is performed by the new media and a new author.

In the next, third, section of this article I will focus on key features of heritage film stylistics to illustrate how Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* fits into

2 Canadian narratologist André Gaudreault calls adaptation "an art of borrowing" (Gaudreault. Marion 2018, 327).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the comfortable visual schemes created by that style. In the fourth section I will examine Gorris's radical visual imagination as it creates discomfort for the viewer, to demonstrate how the filmmaker's visual poetics and the heritage film style are integrated in her *Mrs. Dalloway*, and how a classic text changes its meanings when viewed through the lens of two different visual systems. The main task of this article is to define the performative meaning of an auteurist adaptation that does not exploit or appropriate but expands the literary through the filmic.

3 The Comforts of the 'Heritage Film'

Film adaptations of the prose of Virginia Woolf have been discussed in detail by Earl G. Ingersoll in *Screening Woolf: Virginia Woolf on / and / in Film* (2017). Ingersoll focuses on close readings of three adaptations (apart from two pastiches, *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham and its filmic adaptation by Stephen Daldry, and *Mr. Dalloway* by Robin Lippincott): *To the Lighthouse* (1983) by Colin Gregg, *Orlando* (1992) by Sally Potter, and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) by Gorris. Though it is difficult to underestimate her detailed, nuanced readings of the films in their comparison to the literary sources, Ingersoll obviously supports a literature-centred approach to adaptations and, therefore, focuses on the filmic 'difficulties' and 'failings' involved in adapting Woolf's texts.

In this article I offer a different approach and explore the film's visual systems as they incorporate the literary text. The first system to be considered is that of the heritage film style.

'Heritage film' is a term we apply here to a corpus of films shot in Britain in the eighties-nineties and often adapted from literary classics. A heritage film is a period film that reconstructs with a nostalgic stance the past of 'Britishness', that is, the British Empire before the First World War and between the wars. All that influences the viewer's visual expectations lies in the imagery: the costumes, landscapes and interiors. The heritage film provokes an escapist reaction on the part of the spectator, who looks back upon a problem-free, comfortable, aestheticized British past. The heritage film represents a model of the past that is 'likable', inoffensive, and user-friendly.

The heritage film flourished in Great Britain at the time when American investments in British film fell off dramatically: from $270.1 million in 1986 to $49.6 million in 1989 (Colón Semenza, Hasenfratz 2015, 323). The central canonic films of the heritage tradition belong to American film director James Ivory and are adapted from the works of E.M. Forster (*A Room with a View*, 1985; *Maurice*, 1987; *Howards End*, 1992). Another important name in heritage film production is Charles Sturridge who also adapted Forster (*Where the Angels fear to Tread*, 1991) and Evelyn Waugh (*A Handful of Dust*, 1988).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

The heritage film continues an influential tradition in American and British film industries, that of films that transport the viewer to a romanticized past by way of period costumes, interiors, and picturesque English landscapes. In the thirties this niche was occupied by the so-called 'prestige films'', such as *Wuthering Heights* (1939) by William Wyler and *Jane Eyre* (1943) by Robert Stevenson. The term 'prestige film' refers to classic Hollywood and British adaptations of works that occupy a higher position in the Western canon. In the sixties-seventies the so-called 'Panavision adaptations' came to the forefront. The term was introduced by Colón Semenza and Hasenfratz and refers to films like *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) by David Lean, *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1967) by John Schlesinger, *Justine* (1969) by George Cukor, *Wuthering Heights* (1970) Robert Fuest, *Women In Love* (1969) by Kurt Russel, *The Duellists* (1977) by Ridley Scott. Colón Semenza and Hasenfratz explain:

> [w]hile the earlier prestige films were generally shot in black and white, projected onto screens in the Academy ratio, and filmed largely in studio, these films employed wide-screen formats, usually Panavision, made full use of color, and were passionately dedicated to location shooting and a pictorialism arising from it. (Colón Semenza, Hasenfratz 2015, 270-1)

Thus, the heritage film emerges against the background of a well-established tradition of visually spectacular adaptations of the British classics.

The most representative figure in the heritage tradition, James Ivory, is renowned for working with the same international team, including scriptwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala and producer Ismail Merchant. Ivory's work is a model for the heritage film proper. The structure of his films builds around a group of characters, the action developing slowly and gradually, with considerable weight placed on elaborate dialogue. Particular attention is paid to the style of the mise-en-scène and its elements such as setting and costumes. Heritage films usually do not pride themselves on experimental montage or sound effects. The mise-en-scène creates a special museum space ('heritage space', according to Andrew Higson): the elements of the setting are as if put on display, more spectacular than functional. Higson compares the heritage film with a 'jewel box' containing the treasures of a traditional past (Higson 2003). Elaborating on this image, we might imagine that the screen is the shop window of a jewellery boutique, opening onto the treasures on sale.

In the proposal episodes in *A Room with a View*, Ivory layered heritage elements one atop the other: a meadow in an English province with a horse walking on the grass; a young couple – Cecil Vyse (Daniel Day-Lewis) and Lucy Honeychurch (Helena Bonham Carter) – in an English garden, a blooming white rose in the foreground, a piece of garden décor, a small

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

fountain or a column. The next scene is set indoors, where the viewer can admire interior pieces: armchairs with embroidered cushions, glass bottles and decanters (responsible for the picturesque spots of light), a folding screen, a tortoise, figurines on the bookshelves.

In her comprehensive study, *Heritage Film Audiences* (2011), Claire Monk focuses on several types of pleasure audiences obtain when viewing these films. She considers visual pleasure in general, and the pleasure of looking at realistic/authentic details in particular. The spectator does not so much seek engagement in the plot, themes, and emotional context, but first and foremost appreciates the film's visual texture. This opposition of two audience responses, appreciation and engagement, is central to understanding the effects of the heritage film. Appreciation comes before engagement; moreover, viewers want to think that what they appreciate is well made, both materially and symbolically. Viewers, thus, are reminded that what they are watching has a high cultural value.

The heritage-film adaptation seeks to support spectators in their choice of a well-made film based on well-made literature dramatised by 'quality' directors and actors; spectators thus achieve endorsement that their taste is good. To a certain extent, this type of adaptation reduces the classical to the qualitative, prestigious, and respectable. Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway* fits well into this stylistic system. Its leading roles are played by actors with an 'Ivory film past': Vanessa Redgrave (Mrs. Dalloway) had appeared in *Howards End* as Ruth Wilcox and Rupert Graves (Septimus Warren Smith) played a number of roles in the heritage films shot by Ivory and Sturridge. Special attention is given to settings, costumes, and props, and on-location shots remind viewers of the museum and jewelry box metaphors applied by Higson to Ivory adaptations of Forster and Henry James. Green lawns, young girls' white dresses and men's light summer suits; leisure hours spent reading, drinking tea, gardening, and taking long walks in the countryside; all these visual emblems of 'Britishness' are present in Ivory's films almost independently of plots and themes. Spotting the same visual markers in Gorris's film, viewers find themselves on the familiar territory of the typical heritage mise-en-scène with its comfort and visual stability.

The viewer's gaze is invited to take pleasure in the imagery of Gorris's *Mrs. Dalloway*. The importance of the 'pleasure-gaze' is emphasised in the repeated scene of Clarissa's gazing at herself in the mirror (the lady in the mirror is a key motif, present, for example, in Woolf's short story *The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection*, 1929). On the one hand, the woman's gaze in the mirror offers a way to forefront the notion of passing time. The mirror is a register of changes, so obvious in appearance. On the other hand, Clarissa's gaze in the mirror is hardly only critical, or regretful. She looks at herself because she likes what she sees: admiring oneself in the mirror (vanity) is part and parcel of her preparations for

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635





Figure 1. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P.

Figure 2. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the evening party, where everyone admires each other's as well as their own looks (figs. 1-2).

The film's mise-en-scène (the work of production designer David Richens and costume designer Judy Pepperdine) invites the viewer also to admire, to 'window-shop', as it were, pictorial space and its details.

Another type of gaze, exploited in the film, is the sweeping gaze of the flaneur. It can also belong to Clarissa (though not only to her). Woolf's motif of strolling is dramatised in the film, as it becomes a mise-en-scène formula allowing the characters to walk through the city, their gazes sweeping over the cityscape. This journey of the gaze is replicated by the viewer watching the film. The viewers swap visual pleasures, which are both static (the costumes, the props) and dynamic (the camera work of the strolling gaze). And yet, the idea of elegant visual pleasures seems to contradict Gorris's style and the messages that her films seek to impart to viewers.

4 The Interplay of Auteur Poetics and the Heritage Film Style

Thematically speaking, Gorris confronts the condition of women in a world dominated by men. Her first film, *A Question of Silence (De stilte rond Christine M*, 1982), explored an absurd criminal case in which three women, complete strangers to one another, murder a shop-owner who had accused one of them of shoplifting. The main character's refusal to speak and the inexplicable nature of the conflict force the women's court-appointed psychiatrist to take stock of her own life and its priorities. Another radical film by Gorris, *Broken Mirrors* (*Gebroken spiegels*, 1984), focuses on events taking place in an Amsterdam brothel. According to the IMDb genre definition, the film is a 'psychological thriller'. *Mrs. Dalloway* then does not meet the typical expectations of Dorris's audience. Her adaptation of *Mrs. Dalloway* might seem to represent a discontinuity in her filmmaking practices. From our vantage point, however, no such discontinuity exists, and Gorris's adaptation of Woolf's text will be examined through the lens of her earlier film, Oscar-winning *Antonia's Line* (*Antonia*, 1995). Thus I hope to demonstrate that, in her adaptation, Gorris is still working with her favourite themes and motifs, expanding the literary through the filmic.

Antonia's Line is a family saga that unfolds against the background of provincial Dutch landscapes. The events of this saga are juxtaposed to the idyllic background. Its plot centres on five generations of women; Antonia is the head of the family. Though she and her daughter, granddaughter, etc., face with a number of hardships (from religious hypocrisy to pregnancy out of wedlock, and male violence), all the women persist in having their own way, in accordance with their 'line', as the film's English title suggests. The filmmaker's explicit feminist views are dramatised through the figure of Antonia, her integrity, self-sufficiency, and strength.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635





Figure 3. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P.

Figure 4. *Antonia's Line* (1995). Directed by M. Gorris. © Antonia's Line International N.V./ Antonia's Line Ltd

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Interpreting *Mrs. Dalloway* through the lens of *Antonia's Line* requires that we focus on two aspects of filmic narrative structure: the plot and stylistic leitmotifs. The similarities between the two plot structures are obvious from the very opening episodes of both films. They visualize one day in the life of a woman advanced in years. The continuity of the narrative, centered on the events of one day, is interrupted by a number of flashbacks/memories (almost a film-long one in *Antonia's Line*; shorter, more sporadic ones in *Mrs. Dalloway*). In the final scenes, having relived the past, the main heroines find peace. Antonia finds it in death. She dies surrounded by her large family, having done the most important thing in her life: she completed her personal project, 'drawing' her 'line'. While Clarissa paradoxically finds peace in her ability to embrace life again, for just another day, perhaps. On the level of plot, both films work with embedded narratives, shifts in time, shifts in the characters' age and appearance. In *Mrs. Dalloway* the role of the central character is played by two actresses, Vanessa Redgrave and Natascha McElhone (figs. 3-4).

The heroines' memories are stylistically marked in a similar way. Gorris uses double exposure and blurred focus to represent the transition from the present to the past, thus introducing a flashback. In doing so, she uses a common formal cliché to emphasise the importance of the frames and embedded structures in her film. This familiar technique marks the moment the heroine 'enters' the past. The same cannot be said about the point of 'exit' from the memory of the past back into the present time. The result is that both films blur the borders between the past and the present: eventually Gorris wants to emphasise that the present and the past are merged for her characters, and that there is no obvious hierarchy between them. This is visualised in the dancing scenes in both films. In the dancing scene in *Antonia's Line*, old Antonia acquires her middle-aged looks and waltzes with her 'dead' husband; to enhance the scene's metaphorical message Gorris resurrects a number of the dead characters of this narrative. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa dances with both Richard Dalloway and Peter Walsh, changing partners, until finally there appears a freeze frame, an emblem of the idyllic times at Bourton (figs. 5-6).

In the visual poetics of both films a significant role is played by another mise-en-scènic element, the shots of a woman by the window (figs. 7-8). In *Antonia's Line* there is a minor character, Mad Madonna (Malle Madonna in the Dutch version), a mad woman who howls at a full moon. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa opens the window and pronounce her inner monologue, which includes her suicidal intentions. Leaving aside the choice of the nickname "Mad Madonna", the issues that Gorris has with Catholicism and catholic neuroses, we need to explore this purely cinematic element, the visual rhyme that exists in the shot. The window places the two women in an imaginary framework producing the portrait of a woman that catches the viewer's gaze. The fact that the window is open underscores the visual

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635





Figure 5. *Antonia's Line* (1995). Directed by M. Gorris. © Antonia's Line International N.V./ Antonia's Line Ltd

Figure 6. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635





Figure 7. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc./Newmarket Capital Group L.P

Figure 8. *Antonia’s Line* (1995). Directed by M. Gorris. © Antonia’s Line International N.V./ Antonia’s Line Ltd

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635



Figure 9. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997). Directed by M. Gorris. © Overseas Filmgroup Inc. / Newmarket Capital Group L.P

metaphor: the two women do not stand behind closed windows as silent witnesses, but open the windows to address the world and let their voices sound. While in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* Clarissa behaves like a distant observer, looking at an old lady across the street, in the film not only does she observe, but also tries to communicate. However, Gorris's Clarissa attempt at speaking out her feelings involves a communication failure, which emerges clearly when we compare the two scenes in the films: in fact, neither of the two women can indeed speak aloud. Mad Madonna does not articulate any language but only emits a sound. Clarissa speaks with a muffled voice, pronouncing a long inner monologue. The visual rhyme develops an important theme of Gorris, that of the question of the silence of the women who are unable or unwilling to talk about their condition.

This detail reveals how Gorris interprets Woolf's text, and how she manages to expand those themes that are more important for her through her visual poetics. Gorris's expansion makes use a feature that is characteristic of her style, that is, her technique of disrupting narrative continuity with short grotesque episodes that represent the characters' subjective vision. For instance, in *Antonia's Line* Danielle is a visionary artist who transforms reality with her gaze. A funeral scene is interrupted by Granny rising from the dead, sitting up on her coffin and singing an old popular song, *My Blue Heaven*. Her singing is accompanied by an imaginary choir, and the song is incorporated into the funeral hymns in a fine and absurd way, in a

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

scene that is both discomforting and amusing for the audience. Another picturesque example that has become a visual emblem of *Antonia's Line* is the scene in which a school teacher, who Danielle fancies at first sight, turns into Botticelli's Venus.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* similarly disruptive elements are associated with both Septimus Warren Smith (who sees a friend killed in battle) and Clarissa (who sees Septimus in her mind's eye). Septimus's hallucinations are set in a scene in the park where the character sees his friend Evans wearing a uniform, blood smitten, slowly advancing toward him. "Evans, for God's sake, don't come", Septimus cries out, and Evans explodes, to be replaced by two laughing Londoners taking a walk in the park (fig. 9).

Reading the film adaptation of *Mrs. Dalloway* through both the heritage film tradition and the auteur style allows us to arrive at a conclusion about how an auteur works with the literary source. To represent the antagonism of the comfortable and the radical, the feminine and the feminist that Gorris considers essential in Woolf's text, she uses the conflict of visual emblems, opposing her visual poetics to the heritage film style. This conflict needs to be revealed for a number of reasons. First, Gorris works with Woolf's historic context, the world after the First World War. Septimus Warren Smith suffers from shell shock and thereby embodies echoes of the war. Gorris, an attentive reader of Woolf, depicts a world that is dangerously balanced between newly-established harmony and memories of the war. Second, Gorris links this context with the present, touching on issues of modern formations of feminine identity. The visual emblems of the heritage film, the accent on the material culture of the past, the beauty of costumes and interiors are linked to the feminine, womanly and comfortable. This is Mrs. Dalloway's choice, according to the plot. The emblems of Gorris's style, marking the problem zones (hallucinations, death, forbidden sex), belong to the territory of risks that Mrs. Dalloway tries to shut out of her life but contemporary womanhood, according to Gorris, cannot.

The resulting dialogue between the auteur's style and that of the heritage film translates Woolf's fragility of the inner and the outer, a fine line between the comfortable and the uncomfortable, fear and confidence, splashes of sensuality and frigidity, intense vividness of moments and everyday routine.

5 Conclusion

Using the film *Antonia's Line* as a lens for 'reading' *Mrs. Dalloway* helps us to discern a meaningful change that occurs in Gorris's version of Woolf's novel. In *Antonia's Line*, Gorris creates a model of a family of a radical type. In Antonia's house, at a big table, very different people get together: her new husband with his many sons, a former priest, two village fools,

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

two lesbian lovers, a village bookworm, etc. These people share the same values of tolerance that unite them more than family ties could do. However, this family does not look ultra-modern in its tolerance but reminds the viewer of pre-historic tribes, of the communal existence based on simple earthly cares. Antonia, if we follow Gorris's logic, takes all the responsibility for her family by reviving the values of matriarchy. She is a village matron, feeding, caring, defending. The characters of the film seem to accept this pagan ideology; they also live in tune with natural rhythms (haymaking, harvesting, etc.).

The accent on woman's central role is present in *Mrs. Dalloway* too. But it is *Antonia's Line* that helps us to see the affirmation of feminine vitality in that filmic adaptation of a classic novel, and appreciate the undoubted importance of what Clarissa is doing. Clarissa is not just arranging a party, she is organising a paradoxical family get-together; this family exists according to the rules established by her. Gathering a family is a womanly impulse that on the basis of Woolf's text Gorris fixes and affirms. In her interpretation this impulse offers a way to organise a woman's life and a way to oppose male dominance.

The detailed analysis of Gorris's two films reveals an important point for our analysis of cinematic adaptation of literary works: a close reading of the adaptation that prioritizes its links with its cinematic context allows us to see in the adapting practice the process of expanding literature. A cinematic version made by an auteur sets out to expand the literary and thereby to complicate it.

For scholars of film adaptation, I believe, a director's visual poetics offer a more productive point of focus than the poetics of the literary source. The literary source is not 'translated' onto the screen; instead, it is expanded through different media resources. This expansion is the effect of film adaptation that lies at the core of a film director's art and constitutes the viewer's experience.

Bibliography

Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovitch (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Austin: The University of Texas Press.

Bluestone, George (1957). *Novels into Film*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bluestone, George (2003). *Novels into Film: The Metamorphosis of Fiction into Cinema*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Boyum, Joy Gould (1985). *Double Exposure: Fiction Into Film*. New York: Universe Books.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Cartmell, Deborah (2017). "Adaptation as Exploitation". *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 45(2). URL `http://www.salisbury.edu/lfq/_issues/first/adaptation_as_exploitation.html` (2019-02-20).
Colón Semenza, Greg M.; Hasenfratz Bob (2015). *The History of British Literature on Film, 1895-2015*. New York; London: Bloomsbury Academic. DOI `https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501304460`.
Elsaesser, Thomas; Hagener, Malte (2015). *Film Theory: An Introduction through the Senses*. New York; London: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315740768`.
Higson, Andrew (2003). *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Hutcheon, Linda (2006). *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York; London: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203957721`.
Ingersoll, Earl G. (2017). *Screening Woolf: Virginia Woolf on / and / in Film*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
Jameson, Frederic (2011). "Adaptation as a Philosophical Problem". MacCabe, Colin; Warner, Rick; Murray, Kathleen (eds), *True to the Spirit: Film Adaptation and the Question of Fidelity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 215-34.
Gaudreault, André; Marion, Philippe (2018). "An Art of Borrowing: The Intermedial Sources of Adaptation". Cutchins, Dennis; Krebs, Katja; Voigts, Eckart (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Adaptation*. Abingdon-New York: Routledge, 327-39. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315690254-34`.
Leitch, Thomas (2007). *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*. Baltimore (MD): Johns Hopkins University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1353/book.3302`.
McFarlane, Brian (1996). *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Monk, Claire (2011). *Heritage Film Audiences: Period Films and Contemporary Audiences in the UK*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748638246.001.0001`.
Murray, Simone (2012). *The Adaptation Industry: The Cultural Economy of Contemporary Literary Adaptation*. New York-London: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203807125`.
Sanders, Julie (2015). *Adaptation and Appropriation*. New York; London: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315737942`.
Stam, Robert (2005). *Literature through Film: Realism, Magic and the Art of Adaptation*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Woolf, Virginia (1925). *Mrs. Dalloway*. London: The Hogarth Press.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Adapting Shakespeare Around the Globe
The Construction of Otherness and its Ideological Stakes in the Films *O* and *Omkara*

Andrei Nae
(Universitatea din Bucureşti, România)

Abstract In the past two decades, the rejection of the fidelity criterion has led to the release of a multitude of films that rework and appropriate canonical literary works to suit local political goals. The works of William Shakespeare have been some of the main beneficiaries of this new direction, as indicated by the significant number of appropriations, remediations, and 'tradaptations' (translations-adaptations) that have turned Shakespeare into a global figure. In this article I focus on two film adaptations of *Othello*, *O* (Nelson, 2001) and *Omkara* (Bhardwaj, 2006), that recontextualize the play's narrative content into two different settings at the turn of the millennia: the American South and India. My aim is to highlight the manner in which the two films repurpose the content of the play in order to reveal the tensions that mark the two local cultures. Early modern concerns such as miscegenation, female sexuality, and religious and racial otherness are appropriated and represented along new cultural coordinates that reflect the anxieties of the two new local cultures. For example, in *O*, the issue of miscegenation is translated in accordance with the racism that marks the conservative American South, while in *Omkara* miscegenation is translated as the conflict between two Indian views on marriage: the traditional one that advocates arranged marriages, and the modern one that supports love marriages.

Keywords Global Shakespeare. Shakespeare into films. Adaptation. Appropriation. Miscegenation.

1 Introduction[1]

Shakespeare's *Othello* is a domestic tragedy that brings into focus transcultural themes, such as those of accommodating otherness, the projection of dominant anxieties on race and gender, and miscegenation. In recent film 'tradaptations' (Hodgdon 2003, 99; Nicolaescu 2010, 101-2) or appropriations (Sanders 2006, 26) of *Othello*, these issues are tackled relative to the

1 Research for this work was supported by the UEFISCDI research grant PN-III-P4-IDPCE-2016-0741, no. 1/2017, "The Circulation of Shakespeare's Texts in the South-Eastern Border".

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/005
Submitted: 2018-10-13 | Accepted: 2018-11-08

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

new cultural contexts in which the narrative content is transposed. The aim of this paper is to analyse the cultural translation of these themes in Tim Blake Nelson's *O* (2001) and Vishal Bhardwaj *Omkara* (2006). Both films rework and repurpose Shakespeare so as to fit their respective local cultural tensions, namely the inclusion of African-Americans in South American society, and the tension between conservative and liberal/progressive views on marriage in contemporary India. The two films are indicative of a deterritorialized condition of Shakespeare's works that, in the age of globalisation, have travelled beyond national English border and have been adapted to new cultural environments.

2 Otherness in the Play

The in-betweenness of *Othello* is announced as the play's main theme from its very beginning by its subtitle, *The Moor of Venice*, which features the juxtaposition of two nouns representing two irreconcilable cultures. Venice is the name of a Christian, almost modern state, while 'moor' is a word that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries designated inhabitants of Northern Africa, who could be non-black Muslims, black Christians or black Muslims (Hall 2007, 359). The type of otherness predicated by the historical meaning of 'moor' is a broad one which may include religious, ethnic, racial alterity, or any intersection of the three. In the case of Shakespeare's *Othello*, the kind of otherness to which the play refers seems primarily to be a racial one. The text of the play undeniably remarks Othello's black complexion, yet it is not clear to what extent the phrases used are to be treated as an objective representation of the character, as exaggerations of Iago, or as embellishments of the author. If Iago's descriptions are accurate, "black ram" (*Othello*, I, 1, 26), then Othello is to be considered as having a very dark skin colour, thus signifying radical otherness. If, on the other hand, Iago is merely exaggerating out of hate, or Shakespeare was only embellishing his character's speech with hyperboles, then Othello is a moor with a lighter black skin colour. In this case, the character is more familiar and what is stressed is his hybridity.

Othello's hybridity is reflected throughout the entire play and marks the character's evolution from a valiant soldier in the service of the Venetian state to a murderer. He is a case of mimicry, "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1994, 86) and it is up to the other characters, depending on their goals and interests, to recognise Othello's sameness and discard his otherness, or, conversely, to acknowledge his otherness and ignore his sameness. As far as the former case is concerned, characters such as the senators will describe him as a "valiant Moor" (*Othello*, III, 1, 35) and Cassio will claim "For I have serv'd him, and the man com-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

mands | Like a full soldier" (*Othello*, II, 1, 47-8). As far as the latter case is concerned, Roderigo and especially Iago are very keen on stressing his otherness.

Their prejudice against Othello relies on early modern conceptualizations of the soul, which pay tribute to Ancient Greek accounts by Plato and Aristotle. As Peter Harrison argues, one fundamental preoccupation of early modern philosophy was the condition of man after the Fall. A salient trait of post-lapsarian man that early modern philosophers sought to mend was man's (or, to be more precise, reason's) incapacity to govern the passions (Harrison 2007, 6). While reason was regarded as a higher nobler part of the soul, the divine part of man even, the passions were seen as unruly motions of the sensitive, animal, natural part of man, which were intimately connected to the body and the senses (Dixon 2003, 18-21). While western culture had a long tradition of cultivating and inventing therapies to tame the passions,[2] non-western cultures had no such preoccupation, which meant that their subjects, sharing the same decayed post-lapsarian condition, were likely to let themselves be governed by the passions, i.e. by their animal parts.

Reading *Othello* from this perspective, we can claim that Iago's slanderous insults are also informed by early modern pre-psychology. In fact, Iago's overtly expressed view on the soul tunes in very well with the debates unfolding and the ideas that circulated in Shakespeare's time:

> Our bodies are gardens, to the which our | wills are gardeners; […] But *we have | reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal | stings, our unbitted lusts*; whereof I take this that | you call love, to be a sect or scion. (*Othello*, I, 3, 44; italics added)

Iago endorses the idea of a conflicting nature of man, with his body and its 'motions' struggling against a reason which seeks to 'cool' them. The garden metaphor sheds light upon the privileged position occupied by reason in relation to the sensitive part of the soul (Dixon 2003, 31). Consequently, when Iago calls Othello "an old black ram" (*Othello*, I, 1, 26) or "barbary horse" (*Othello*, I, 1, 26), he hints at the presupposed dominance of his lower sensitive part of his soul over reason. Even those descriptions that do not allude to the animal world still refer to his body, "thick lips" (*Othello*, I, 1, 26) or "his Moorship" (*Othello*, I, 1, 24) and, therefore, stresses the same anxiety of the unnatural government of the sensitive over the rational soul. Given the overemphasis laid by Iago on Othello's difference and the rapaciousness with which he projects what we today might call negative stereotypes on his black skin, it is safe to say that, for

2 Richard Sorabji (2000) in his book *Emotion and Peace of Mind* argues that developing therapies for taming the passions are as early as Stoic philosophy.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Iago, Othello's turns into "*menace* – a difference that is almost total but not quite" (Bhabha 1994, 91; italics in the original).

Intimately related to Othello's otherness and his hybridity is the issue of miscegenation. While Brabatio's "treason of the blood" (*Othello*, I, 1, 28) may mislead us into reading Othello's and Desdemona's marriage in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century racialist terms, I propose that we approach their marriage by referring to the same early modern philosophical context. In early modernity, man's soul was viewed as a microcosmos. The conflict between reason and the passions was reflected in the world outside man as well, both in politics and in the family. From a political point of view, the king represented reason while the masses represented the passions; in the domestic sphere of the family the parallel was just as valid. Because women were deemed incapable of properly governing their passions, they had to submit themselves to their husband's reason (Harrison 1998, 51). However, if the husband himself was a person incapable of managing his own sensitive part, then how could he be able to successfully keep his wife in check? The bond between Desdemona and Othello is seen as unnatural first and foremost because, according to early modern conceptions, the foundation of masculine supremacy is undermined by Othello's being subdued by the sensitive part of his soul. Married to Othello, Desdemona would become an unruly wife under a husband incapable of governing her.

The play further reflects early modern anxieties with respect to women's fickleness, inconstancy, and tendency to yield to the passions. When discussing Desdemona's love for Othello, Iago claims that

> Her *eye* must be *fed*; | and what delight shall she have to look on the | devil? When the blood is made dull with the act of | sport, there should be,—again to inflame it and to | give satiety a fresh appetite,—loveliness in favour; | sympathy in years, manners, and beauties; all which | the Moor is defective in: now, for want of these | required conveniences, her delicate tenderness will | find itself abused, begin to heave the gorge, | disrelish and abhor the Moor; very *nature* will | instruct her in it, and compel her to some second | choice […]. (*Othello*, II, 1; italics added)

According to Iago, Desdemona's attraction to Othello is driven by her desire to please her senses. Such a carnal love cannot last, hence she will move on to the next lover, once her appetite is satiated. The use of the word "nature" in "very nature will instruct her" suggests that she has no control over her bodily appetitive side, that she is a slave to her passions. This description of Desdemona is in keeping with the early modern prejudice against women as sensuous, fickle and inconstant beings.

Besides the fear of untamed passions, Othello's otherness is additionally buttressed by his association with pre-modern practices. The only reason-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

able explanation for Desdemona elopement that Brabantio can come up with is the use of magic.

> O thou foul thief, where hast thou stow'd my daughter? | Damn'd as thou art, thou hast enchanted her; | […] That thou hast practis'd on her with foul charms; | Abus'd her delicate youth with drugs or minerals | That weaken motion:—I'll have't disputed on. (*Othello*, II, 1, 32)

Magic and sorcery are chiefly pre-modern practices, against which Christianity warns. In the eyes of Brabantio, who voices a widely shared cultural anxiety, Othello is a not only of a different race, but also a pagan. Brabantio's accusation completes the spectrum of anxieties carried by Moorish identity in the sense that now Othello's racial otherness intersects that of religious otherness.

In the context of the characters' radical positions towards Othello, it is interesting to see how Othello regards himself. Not surprisingly, his opinion of himself is ambivalent, partly confirming the views of both sides. On the one hand, Othello regards himself as being capable of governing his passions: "My parts, my title, and *my perfect soul* | Shall manifest me rightly" (*Othello*, II, 1, 30; italics added) and tells Iago that he wants to know the truth about Desdemona: "not To please the palate of my appetite; | Nor to comply with heat,—the young affects" (*Othello*, III, 1, 42). On the other hand, when he is faced with the brawl roused by Cassio he admits: "Now, by heaven, My blood begins *my safer guides to rule; | And passion, having my best judgement collied*, | Assays to lead the way (*Othello*, II, 2, 64; italics added). Othello adopts the dominant discourse on otherness by sharing the general idea that women easily give sway to their appetites: "Oh, curse of marriage. | That we can call these delicate creatures ours. | And not their appetites!" (*Othello*, III, 3, 83). He regards the Turks as the radical others against whom the Venetian community and he define themselves: "Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that | Which Heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?" (*Othello*, II, 3, 62). Yet he does not refrain from committing murder, an act that defies his alleged allegiance to the laws of the Venetian state. He denies having used magic in wooing Desdemona, but tells her that the handkerchief that his mother gave him has "magic in the web of it" (*Othello* IV, 3, 92).

Othello is incapable of creating a coherent narrative about himself that can accommodate both facets of his identity. In this sense, the play turns into the story of a struggle between Othello's Venetian identity and his pre-modern Moorish identity, with the latter prevailing towards the end: "that in Aleppo once, | Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk | Beat a Venetian" (*Othello*, V, 2, 137).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

3 Tim Blade Nelson's *O* (2001)

Tim Blake Nelson's *O* is an appropriation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, which transposes the narrative content of the play to a new cultural context – the South of the USA at the turn of the millennia. The chronotopical shift refashions the themes of otherness, hybridity, projection of anxieties onto race, and the fickle nature of women. The film's main character, Odin, referred to as 'O', is the only African-American student in his high-school and is the top player of its basketball team. Like Othello, he is a case of hybridity since he overtly relinquishes his ghetto background, yet can never fully absorb the dominant white culture. As in the play, depending on each character's interests, Odin is regarded either as being 'a good boy' by his coach, who is nicknamed 'the Duke', or a rapist and drug user who has had trouble with the Police, by dean Brable. Unlike the play in which Othello is the only moor featured and the position of the radical other is occupied by the Turks, the film casts another African-American as the radical other: Dell, the drug dealer. In this case, Odin is left to fill the gap between the dominant white culture and the African American subculture.

In addition to the accounts of other characters, the film makes use of its own narrative affordances, such as the visual and aural mode, in order to render hybridity. For example, the love-making scene between Desi and Odin abounds in shots of the intertwining of Desi's white skin and Odin's black complexion. The beginning of the film features images of doves interrupted by that of a hawk soaring above the basketball ground, with Giuseppe Verdi's aria *Ave Maria*, from his opera *Otello*, playing in the background. This scene points to Odin's otherness, as well as his outstanding skills as a sportsman. Musically, hybridity is rendered by the cutting of *Ave Maria*, a symbol of white dominant culture, with Deep 6ix's *Bum Bum*, a subversive hardcore rap song, symbolising subversive alternative African American culture (Hodgdon 2003, 101).

One of the most important changes from Shakespeare's text to the screen and from early modern Europe to the American South of the turn of the millennia is the manner in which the characters relate to Othello's/Odin's hybridity. While western early modernity disavowed ambiguity, because it was associated with non-Christianity, superstition, pre-modernity and unruly passions, the white American youth culture of the early 2000s finds itself at the opposite pole and seems to fetishize rather than abhor hybridity. This fascination with hybridity dovetails with the conception of individualism that underpins the cultural identity of modern western white teenagers and young adults. Beginning with the second half of the twentieth century, youth culture seems to have adopted the defiance of social norms as a norm itself. Consequently, individuals who wish to assert their culture identity as young modern westerners often have to balance the need to comply with dominant social norms, but at the same time

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

must defy them to a moderate, acceptable degree. This means that many youngsters deliberately adopt the values and norms of subaltern cultural identities that would generally be considered out of tune with their cultural backgrounds. Young white middle-class Americans often become affiliated with a variety of subcultures that are created around a particular artistic movement that asserts the identity of various subaltern groups. *O* is representative of these cultural dynamics because it portrays the manner in which the white students of Alabama seem to be deeply immersed in African-American culture: they listen to gangsta rap at their parties, use African-American slang, and even buy drugs from an African-American drug dealer (Hodgdon 2003, 102).

The desire to be different in order to attain cultural capital is best exposed at the beginning of the film, when Hugo explains:

> "All my life, I always wanted to fly. I always wanted to live like a hawk. I know you're not supposed to be jealous of anything, but [...] to take flight, everything and everyone, now that's living". (Tim Blake Nelson, *O*. 2002. DVD, Lionsgate, 2′)

Judging from this point of view, Hugo's evilness is first and foremost driven by envy – he is envious of Odin's otherness and is dissatisfied with his sameness. Arguably, Hugo develops an inferiority complex due to the fact that, because he is just like everybody else but not like Odin, he is neglected by his father. A similar fascination with hybridity can be found in Desi. Before making love to Odin, she tells him to have her however he wishes, thus indulging in the phantasy of black men raping women (Burnett 2007, 69). Ironically, while throughout the film Odin tries to be white, all other characters around him try to be black.

While it may be tempting to claim that in this case white culture loses its dominant position, the film makes sure to remind the viewer that, although identities are liquid and heterogeneous, the power relations are still balanced in favour of WASP culture, and that the assertion of otherness is confined within the limits dictated by the ruling culture. The setting in which the plot unfolds is marked as inhospitable to African-Americans as Venice was to Othello. When Odin visits Desi at night, she is wearing an A-shirt with the Confederate flag on it. In their discussion Desi says she does not understand why she cannot use the word "nigger" since "[her] people invented the word", thus alluding to the fact that even at its very core, African-American identity is indebted to the dominant white culture.

Secondly, despite the cultural capital that hybridity may have in the eyes of the ruling culture, one should not ignore the fact that this capital is valid only in as much as it can entertain the dominant white audience. Basketball, and hip hop music for that matter, are indeed a way of getting out of the ghetto, but this type of social mobility is institutionalised, approved

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

of, and supported by the dominant culture. Difference is to be manifested only within the confines of the stage, or within the "magic circle" (Huizinga 1949, 10) of the basketball court and by no means outside of them. Once difference steps out of the magic circle, punishment ensues. At one point during the film, Odin takes part in a slam dunk contest. Being infuriated by the suspicion of his lover's betrayal, he performs his first dunk so violently that he bends the rim of basket. He then hits that basket's backboard with the ball in order for the basket to fall and subsequently lifts the oval rim of the basket in front of the audience. The oval form of the rim suggests Odin's asserting his identity outside the framework imposed by the dominant culture. When he does that, the cheering and applause turn into booing and hooting and he is "lucky he isn't suspended". It is also worth noting that the cloth covering the table of the jury has a Confederate flag pinned on it (fig. 1).



Figure 1. Tim Blake Nelson. *O*. 2002. DVD, ©Lionsgate

As with Shakespeare's character, Odin is incapable of finding the right balance between his native culture and the 'adoptive' one. The more jealous he is, the more he confirms negative stereotypes about African-Americans. His love-making to Desi turns into rape, he indulges in the drugs given by Dell and Hugo, and, finally, he kills Desi in what resembles a school shooting scenario. In his final speech, Odin reminds one of Othello, who in the end admits that he could not tame his "Turk".

> Now, somebody here knows the truth. Somebody needs to tell the goddamn truth. My life is over. That's it. But while you're all out here living

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> yours, sitting around, talking about the nigger who lost it, back in high school, you make sure you tell them the truth. You tell them I loved that girl. I did. But I got played. He twisted my head up. He fucked it up. I ain't no different than none of y'all. My mom ain't no crack head. I wasn't no gangbanger. It wasn't some hood rat drug dealer that tripped me up. It was this white, prep school motherfucker standing right there.[…] You tell them where I'm from… didn't make me do this. (85′)

Although Odin denies his difference and claims that his African-American identity did not motivate his action, his speech is undermined by the very language he uses. Each denial is expressed in African-American dialect, denying the very denial he expresses. His slang connotes the very identity he claims he does not have. Othello's Turk is Odin's language. Furthermore, after committing suicide, Odin is left in a position imitating a hawk with spread wings, thus reaffirming his difference. The final scene features the Police arresting Hugo and news reporters covering the events. The film suggests that the truth so feverishly invoked by Odin will always be mediated and filtered by the white dominant culture (Burnett 2007, 85).

While otherness and hybridity are at the core of the film, the issue of miscegenation has a somewhat ambiguous status. Although the action is set in the South, a region associated with discrimination against African-Americans, the film rarely alludes to pre-Civil War ideas about race. It would also be far-fetched to claim that the film is in any way essentialist. While Odin's last speech does prove that he is incapable of suppressing his cultural roots, nowhere is it implied that Odin acts the way he does because of some biological predetermination. The film's assumption seems to be that one's milieu exerts such a pressure on the individual that it is almost impossible for him or her to overcome it. Taking this assumption into account, Odin and Desi's relationship is frowned upon by the community because it brings together two cultural identities that for the South American dominant culture are irreconcilable.

While the issue of race in *O* lacks the philosophical underpinnings of Shakespeare's play, the views of Hugo with respect to femininity seem to be closer to the ones expressed by Iago. Hugo tells Odin that white women are "snaky. All right, they're horny snakes. They act like we're the ones who want sex, but they want it worse than us, man. They're just subtle about the way they go after it" (37′). This stereotypical image of women goes along the lines of the considerations on femininity expressed in early modern times. Without using the archaic notions of passions and motions, the film maintains the idea that women are driven by sensual needs rather than rational thought. Femininity, therefore, is yet another locus onto which the dominant culture can project its anxieties. Consequently, the love relationship between Odin and Desi is also troublesome because it intersects anxieties related both to race and gender.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

4 Vishal Bhardwaj's *Omkara* (2006)

Omkara is a 2006 Bollywood appropriation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, directed by Vishal Bhardwaj. In this film the play's narrative is transposed to present day India. The role of Othello is assumed by Omkara, also referred to as Omi, who is a gangster in the service of an influential local political leader called Bhaisaab and whose job is to eliminate Bhaisaab's political rivals. While in *Othello*, hybridity relies on the hero's ethnic and religious in-betweenness, in *Omkara* hybridity is redefined as the protagonist's class liminality. Omkara is a half-caste because his father belonged to an upper caste, while his mother to an inferior one. The manner in which the film approaches hybridity differs from the one found in the play. While Othello's conduct is marked by an internal struggle between his native pre-modern self and his modern adoptive cultural identity, Omi's behaviour is not determined by his hybridity but rather by his identity as a murderer. His downfall is not caused by the conflict between two contradictory cultures that find in the character their liminal space, so there is no struggle between a pre-modern and a modern self that is decisively influenced by the intervention of jealousy. While in Shakespeare's play and in *O* jealousy is the element that overturns the balance in favour of the 'dark,' 'barbaric' side of the character, in *Omkara* jealousy turns from pretext into actual motivation. For Omkara, killing Dolly simply means committing another murder, with the difference that this time there were also personal motives involved.

By replacing ethnic otherness with class alterity, the film precludes some of the anxieties present in *Othello* and *O*. Omkara is no longer suspected of using spells and/or drugs in order to woo Desdemona (Dolly), but the film does, nevertheless, manage to include this motif of the original by visually referencing previous, more faithful, adaptations of the play. If *O* refers to Verdi's *Otello*, Omkara has an intertextual relation with Orson Welles's *Othello*. In Welles's 1951 production, when Othello explains to the duke and the senator how he had made Desdemona love him, the director chooses to focus on Othello's face and follow it through a tracking shot as the character moves, in order to emphasise the character's mesmerising eyes (fig. 2). The antithesis between the aural and visual discourse suggests the idea of hybridity and ambivalence – while Othello disclaims having used magic, he enchants his audience with his gaze. In the same scene in Bhardwaj's film, the camera zooms in on Omkara's mesmerising eyes as he tells Bhaisaab (the Duke) and Dolly's father that he did not force Dolly in any way (fig. 3). Then, after Dolly admits having eloped with Omkara, the film shows her memories of how she and Omkara had come to love one another. These recollections are accompanied by a song in the background that emphasises the same motif of the bewitching eyes: "Don't look in his eyes | Don't listen to them | His eyes will deceive you | They'll mesmerize you while you're awake" (17′).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635



Figure 2. Orson Welles. *Othello*. 1999. DVD, © Image Entertainment



Figure 3. Vishal Bhardwaj. *Omkara*. 2007. DVD, © Eros Entertainment

The theme of the play that the adaptation focuses on is that of miscegenation, which is transposed, refashioned and appropriated to fit the Indian context, where younger couples reject the custom of arranged marriage and marry out of love. According to traditional Hindu culture,

> each and every individual has his/her place well-fixed in social and especially in the case hierarchy […]. That goes as far as assuming that even

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> criminals have their part to play in the big drama of the universe […] precisely written down in the divine laws of the universe. This explains the importance of arranged marriages as bonds meant to strengthen the family as a group rather than as individual alliances. […] While no marriage is expected to work if it does not have the family blessing, love is expected to be not the cause of marriage but the outcome of it. (Draga-Alexandru 2010, 197)

By adopting agency and marrying Omkara in spite of her father's decision that she should marry Rujju, Dolly rejects traditional Hindu culture and adopts a modern identitarian model that treasures individualism and self-determination above tradition and family/caste bonds. Therefore, it is safe to say that Vishal Bhardwaj translates/adapts/appropriates the Shakespearean theme of miscegenation and makes use of Shakespeare's cultural prestige to undermine the dominant discourse on marriage. Evidently, the tag 'Shakespeare', which is also present on the theatrical poster and the DVD cover of the film, makes the theme of marriage out of love acceptable to the dominant Hindu culture. Had it not been for the cultural capital of the canonical writer, the theme would have either spawned waves of criticism or been censored. As Andre Lefevere argues,

> The translation of literature, then, must be heavily regulated because it is potentially – and often actually – subversive, precisely because it offers a cover for the translator to go against the dominant constraints of his or her time, not in his or her own name which, in most cases, would not happen to be all that well known anyway, but rather in the name of, and relying on the authority of a writer who is considered great enough in another literature so as not to be ignored in one's own, at least not if one wants to safeguard that literature against provincialism and other forms of atrophy. (1985, 237-8)

Such political workings are applicable to adaptations, as well, since, in a sense, adaptations presuppose not only a transposition from one medium to another, but also imply accommodating the norms of the target culture. However, sometimes adaptations, such as the one discussed in this section, may only pretend to adopt the norms of the target culture, whereas, in fact, the aim is to reform them.

5 Conclusion

To sum up, Shakespeare's *Othello* is a play that stresses early modern anxieties with respect to otherness – be they racial, religious or related to gender. Othello is a character seeking to fashion a coherent narrative that can

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

incorporate both his sameness and his otherness. However, his endeavour will prove to be a failure, as revealed in the play's denouement where his cultural roots eventually prevail and his appetitive side, referred to as the Turk, take hold of his rational side, referred to as the Venetian. *O* transposes Othello's identitarian conflict and adapts it to the American context of the turn of the millennia. Othello's struggle to bridle the passions becomes Odin's struggle to leave behind his African-American ghetto background. Yet, unlike the play in which otherness is fully rejected, the film sheds light upon the status of difference in the commodified entertainment-geared youth culture. Odin's success is assured by his ability to entertain, which is intimately related to his ethnic otherness. However, whilst contemporary American society does accept difference, this can be manifested only on the terms dictated by the dominant culture. Odin's attempt to break free from the power relations imposed by the ruling white group lead to failure: he is not allowed to be different outside the basketball court, and the truth of his story depends on the global media which is owned and run by the same dominant group. *Omkara* too downplays the tragic hero's inner struggle so that it may better focus on the class and gender constraints imposed by traditional Hindu culture. By appropriating and adapting the theme of miscegenation to the Indian context, the film undermines the dominant traditional practice of arranged marriages and, instead, supports modern marriages founded on the love of the two would-be spouses.

The films investigated in this article reveal Shakespeare's status a global, transnational figure that can be adapted to a variety of local cultures and historical contexts. Shakespeare's *Othello* seems to provide a ready-made narrative recipe onto which various cultures can project their own values, tensions, and norms. Shakespeare's plays, including *Othello*, have become cultural battlegrounds where local tensions are disputed and resolved. Moreover, the multitude of ways in which Shakespeare's plays are repurposed is indicative of a liquid (post)modern post-industrial condition of a global culture where top-down power relations are increasingly being contested by bottom-up modes of production. Instead of moving closer to the canon, contemporary audiences bring the canon closer to themselves through adaptations and appropriations in which audiences refashion the canon in accordance with their own expectations.

Bibliography

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London; New York: Routledge.

Burnett, Mark Thornton (2007). *Filming Shakespeare in the Global Marketplace*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Palgrave Shakespeare Studies. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230800809`.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Dixon, Thomas (2003). *From Passions to Emotions – The Creation of Secular Psychological Category.* New York: Cambridge University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511490514`.

Draga Alexandru, Maria-Sabina (2010). "Shakespeare Goes Bollywood: Adaptation and Gender in Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* and *Omkara*". Nicolaescu, Mădălina; Corneanu, Sorana (eds), *(In)hospitable Translations: Fidelities, Betrayals, Rewritings*. Bucharest: The University of Bucharest Publishing House, 189-99.

Hall, Kim F. (2007). "*Othello* and the Problem of Blackness". Dutton, Richard; Howard, Jean E. (eds), *The Tragedies*. Vol. 1 of *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works*. Malden (MA): Blackwell Publishing, 357-74. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470996539.ch19`.

Harrison, Peter (1998). "Reading the Passions". Gaukroger, Stephen (ed.), *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*. London; New York: Routledge, 49-78. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203448519`.

Harrison, Peter (2007). *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511487750`.

Hodgdon, Barbara (2003). "Race-ing Othello, Re-engendering White-out, II". Burt, Richard; Boose, Lydia (eds), *Shakespeare, the Movie II: Popularizing the Plays on Film, TV, Video, and DVD*. London; New York: Routledge, 89-104. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203426180`.

Huizinga, J. [1944] (1949). *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. London; Boston; Henley: Routeldge & Kegan Paul.

Lefevere, Andre (1985). "Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites? The Trouble with Interpretation and the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm". Hermans, Theo (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature*. New York: Routledge, 215-43. Studies in Literary Translation. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315759029-12`.

Nicolaescu, Mădălina (2010). "German 'Tradaptation' of *Macbeth* and the Transvalorization of Legitimate Violence". Nicolaescu, Mădălina; Corneanu, Sorana (eds), *(In)hospitable Translations: Fidelities, Betrayals, Rewritings*. Bucharest: The University of Bucharest Publishing House, 87-101.

Sanders, Julie (2006). *Adaptation and Appropriation*. London; New York: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203087633`.

Shakespeare, William [1994] (2001). *The Tragedy of Othello. The Moor of Venice*. London: Penguin Group, Penguin Popular Classics.

Sorabji, Richard (2000). *Emotion and Peace of Mind. From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. New York: Oxford University Press. The Gifford Lectures.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Re-run and Re-read
Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* as an Archeology of the Present

Alessandra Violi
(Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Italia)

Abstract Hailed by critics as breaking paths for the direction of British fiction, Tom McCarthy's novel *Remainder* (2005) has been described as a way of re-thinking literature in terms of intermedial spaces, be they installations, performance artworks or a 'remix' of writing and film. The newness of *Remainder* seems to hinge on its imitation of a contemporary mediascape saturated with technical images and simulacra, in which reality is totally metamorphosed into a filmic phantasmagoria that novel writing is striving to mimic. Following McCarthy's refusal of the rhetoric of the 'new', the essay discusses the practice of re-enactment described in *Remainder* as a way of digging up images from the past to read the myth of postmodern hyperreality against its grain. McCarthy's 'archeology of the present' takes the concern with mediation and visual culture back to the unfinished business of modernism and its encounter with cinematic technology, reproposing the materialist aesthetics of embodiment that emerged from the conversation among literature, film and medicine in writers such as Joyce, T.S. Eliot and Samuel Beckett.

Keywords Simulacra. Re-enactment. Modernism. Film technology. Literature as medium. Materiality. Embodiment. Neuropathology.

1 Forking Paths

In a recent forum dedicated to ways of re-thinking literature in the new millenium, media critic Boris Groys put forward the idea that the future of literature may lie in an intermedial crossing between the art installation and the novel. In contemporary installations, Groys claims, the art space "ceases to be simply a neutral stage on which a certain story is staged" (Groys 2018, 55). Rather, space itself becomes a story, narrated by a ghostly presence that holds together the exhibited texts, things or videos, making the relations among the objects more important than the objects themselves. Hence the similarity, even the "homology", which Groys detects between the space of the installation and that of the novel, both compared to an "abandoned, haunted house" (56) in which specific

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/006
Submitted: 2018-10-09 | Accepted: 2018-12-01

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

arrangements of things, texts and images offer its visitors an "inscription of a body into a life context" (61).

The only contemporary literary example picked out by Groys as an instance of the novel's future is Tom McCarthy's *Remainder* (2005), whose protagonist, a traumatized, zombie-like narrator who fits perfectly Groys's ghostly presence haunting the novel's topology, does actually turn narrative space into a series of huge installations, built like complicated film sets that materialise "his visions, dreams, but also real contexts and events that left an indelible impression on his brain" (Groys 2018, 61). Written between 1998 and 2001, *Remainder* first came out in 2005 with a small, underground French art publisher, Metronome Press, before achieving international fame and even cult status in Britain, where it was hailed, especially after an influential essay by Zadie Smith (2008), as breaking new ground for the direction of fiction. Asked about the gestation of his novel, McCarthy confirmed that he had entertained the idea that *Remainder* "could have been an art piece" rather than a novel (Morgan 2010, 171), while, in several interviews, he has been expounding his idea of interfacing literature, cinema and the visual arts to create a narrative space that no longer hinges on the traditional, humanistic features of the novel: plot, character, psychological depth, and the expression of an individual, authentic self. To less enthusiastic commentators, such as Joyce Carol Oates, *Remainder*'s self-reflexive turn to the realms of film, installation and the performing arts is the outcome of a "Quentin Tarantinoesque" postmodern world, the symptom of the "politically debased, media-hypnotized culture" (Oates 2007, 50) that has bred McCarthy (born in 1969) and his generation. To corroborate her view, Oates mentions McCarthy's role as the founder, in 1999, of the International Necronautical Society, a semi-fictitious avant-garde network dedicated to interventions in the space of art, fiction, philosophy and media. The irreverent spirit of this "twenty-first century Collège de Pataphysique" (Oates 2007, 48) may thus explain McCarthy's own forays into the arts and into cinema: for instance, with *Greenwich Degree Zero*, an art installation based on Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* that he created with British artist Rod Dickinson in 2006. Another instance would be *Double Take*, a 2009 film-novel co-scripted with Belgian director Johan Grimonprez, perhaps the most telling example of how McCarthy's experiments in intermedial fusion challenge the conventional idea of literature, re-thinking its role in the contemporary media environment.

Yet, for all its vaunted experimentalism and forward-lookingness, McCarthy's project speaks of a future past. Describing it as an "archeology of the present" (Hart, Jaffe 2013, 671), McCarthy has often listed James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett and, in more general terms, the culture of Modernism as a springboard for his anti-humanism and intermedial experiments. At the 2009 Tate Modern exhibition on Futurism, he contemplated the possibility of a Marinettian contemporary literature (Nieland

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

2012, 570), while in his programmatic pamphlet *Trasmission and the Individual Remix* (2012), whose very title echoes T.S. Eliot's essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919), he stated that "we should perhaps stop looking for the radically new and start seeking the radically old instead" (McCarthy 2012, 2). In his 2010 novel *C*, Modernism's ghostly return appears under the guise of a historical Bildungrsoman that tracks the life of a young Englishman, named Serge Carrefax, from the 1890s to 1922, Modernism's *annus mirabilis*. It is a life enmeshed with emerging technological media, from telegraphy and radio to cinema, with Serge appearing less as character than as a lens to be passed over in a series of historical dioramas of our networked present (Kirsch 2010). Thus the title "C", which stands, among other things, for 'communication', is also a reminder of the modernist, Conradian, fictional imperative: *See*. Likewise, what resonates in *Remainder*, especially in the narrator's desire to inscribe his body in aesthetic spaces and live, as McCarthy puts it, "in a movie without there being any movie" (Hart, Jaffe 2013, 668), is Modernism's reinvention of the bodily sensorium through the newborn visual technology of perception and inscription. In his excision of human psychology from the novel, phenomenology and embodiment are what McCarthy's archeology is after.

Quentin Tarantino or Georges Méliès? Why not Quentin Tarantino *and* Georges Méliès?

The present essay probes this conjoint option and suggests that McCarthy's forking paths perform a Borgesian loop. *Remainder*'s hyper-mediated present re-enacts Modernism and actualises one of its virtual futures, the road not taken of a nexus between cinema and literature.

2 Stills from a Film Never Made

We may start by looking more closely at *Remainder*'s postmodernist path and futuristic projections. The protagonist and narrator of the novel, a young man left appropriately nameless and underspecified so as to fit the role of Everyman, falls for cinematic reality out of a sense of his own inauthenticity. The paradox is brilliantly put to work by McCarthy through the paradigm of trauma. A disastrous accident, about which we will be told almost nothing except that "it involved something falling from the sky. Technology. Parts, bits" (Mc Carthy 2005, 5), has severely damaged the narrator's brain functions, obliging him to re-learn even the most basic bodily movements, such as walking or lifting food to his mouth. This leaves him the distressing feeling that everything in his life has become unnatural, "inauthentic and second-hand" (23): his stilted movements have turned into a mere mechanical "jerking back and forth like paused video images" (15), while even his memories come back to him "in moving images, like a film run in instalments, a soap-opera, one five-year episode each week or so"

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

(22). Film is for fake, or at least so it seems. Watching Martin Scorsese's *Mean Streets* (1972) at the cinema, the narrator is, in fact, captivated by Robert De Niro's seamless, gliding movements, the way his bodily gestures are choreographed on the screen so unreflexively as to look fully natural and spontaneous. The actor's celluloid body is "Perfect. Real" (McCarthy 2005, 24), and mediation is a blueprint for authentic reality.

The protagonist's telescoping together of life and cinema is McCarthy's more-than-obvious nod to the mechanisms of the contemporary society of the spectacle, which punctuate the narrator's description of the London street crowd as a "performance" of theatrical "media people" (McCarthy 2005, 51), whose "stylized postures" and "camp gestures" (27, 51) he comments on from the window of a coffee shop, as if updating Edgar Allan Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* (1840) and the emergence of modernity's conflation between life and the cinema screen. Literature's reference to visual culture in this key is such a well-trodden postmodernist *topos* as to be almost a cliché. As Julian Murphet and Lydia Rainford observe, the postmodern novel, for instance with Rushdie or De Lillo, has frequently investigated the impact of visual technologies on notions of identity and authenticity, most often to account for the "'post-subjective' landscapes of the media ecology" (Murphet, Rainford 2003, 6), though sometimes also taking cinema's superficial visuality to task for dissolving all notions of subjective depth:

> Literalness, perhaps the dominant aspect of film, has come to occupy, largely because of film's popularity, a hegemonic place in all the arts. Its chief feature is the abandonment of subjectivity in the work. In place of interiority, which presupposed the individual who was distinguished from the object outside of her or himself by consciousness, even if socially determined or conditioned, literalism dissolves the subject-object split into object relations. (Aronowitz 1994, 54)

McCarthy's deliberate choice of a literal, flat character dissolved 'into object relations', thus seems an ideal candidate for an update on postmodernism, the 'novel as installation' described by Groys. Unlike all the fake and second-hand people around him, who simply mimic media images, the narrator's quest for authenticity involves not simply copying but *being* an image, becoming as 'real' as Robert de Niro. The occasion that triggers his experiments occurs fairly early in the novel. One night, at a friend's party, he has an epiphany. A crack in a wall suddenly conjures the vision of a whole building inhabited by people performing ordinary gestures: frying some liver, playing the piano, fixing a motorbike, delivering the rubbish. The building exudes nothing but affect images, feelings, sounds, and smells from the past, the *déjà vu* of a moment when, he says, he felt *real* (McCarthy 2005, 62). Now he knows what to do with the enormous cash settlement – eight and a half million pounds – that he received in compensation

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

for his traumatic accident. Helped by a company of 'facilitators' called *Time Control UK*, he invests part of his capital (the rest buys him shares in tele-communication companies) in re-enacting that very moment exactly as it was perceived through the crack: "I was going to recreate it: build it up again and live inside it" (McCarthy 2005, 64). The doubling of his vision, itself made of "various things all rolled together: memories, imagining, films" (76), involves no filming at all; he, in fact, insists that no cameras be used (120, 182). Rather, the *déjà vu* is painstakingly reproduced as an elaborately baroque film set, complete with re-enactors endlessly replaying those remembered gestures, in a life-sized, late nineteenth-century twin building called 'Madlyin Mansion' (99). A name that ironically hints both at Marcel Proust's famed 'madelaine' and at Alfred Hitchcock's rehashing of its myth in *Vertigo* (1958), whose female protagonist, named Madelaine, is the emblem of a life lived twice through ghostly repetitions, aesthetic copies and fake doubles. Once he inhabits this stage set, and in the hope of becoming as real as a filmic body, the narrator practices gestures and manoeuvres, from brushing past his kitchen unit to lighting a cigarette or exchanging words with the other re-enactors. Here, for instance, is how the kitchen scene is rehearsed:

> I worked hard on certain actions, certain gestures. Brushing past my kitchen unit, for example. I hadn't been satisfied with the way it had gone on the first day. I hadn't moved past it properly, and my shirt had dragged across its edge for too long. The shirt was supposed to brush the woodwork – kiss it, not more. It was all in the way I half turned so that I was sideways as I passed it. A pretty difficult manoeuvre: I ran through it again and again – at half speed, almost no speed at all, working out how each muscle had to act, each ball and socket turn. (150)

All his gestures get broken down in their "constituent parts" (151) and repeated, rewound, paused, replayed at half speed, as if he himself were a kind of recording device or a "deranged filmmaker" (Colombino 2013, 154) re-playing Fellini's staged film sets in *Otto e Mezzo* (*8 1/2*). Or rather, following the double-looped pattern of a flattened eight (8 = ∞) that turns his financial capital (the eight million pounds) into the symbol of an infinite investment into a real, authentic connection with life, equally guaranteed by a flow of money and of images. Except that, as in Fellini's film, the perfection of the looped 8 is always marred by an unruly remainder, the residual *1/2* that spoils the repetition and obliges him to re-run the whole process from scratch.

From this moment on, the narrative space of *Remainder* is made to coincide with the narrator's frenzied repetitions of past or real life events. After the memory palace, his absurdly complicated installations – the "re-enactment zones" as he prefers to call them – re-enact the banal episode of

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

a tyre change in a garage and a crime scene in the street, to culminate with the "pre-enactment" (McCarthy 2005, 230) of a bank hold-up, which is then turned into an actual heist, producing murderous, 'Tarantinoesque' consequences. Someone gets killed for real, and in hasty (literal) flight he ends up hovering in the air while looking at the world from above: "Reconstructions, everywhere. I looked down at the interlocking, hemmed-in fields, and had a vision of the whole world's surface cordoned off, demarcated, broken into grids in which self duplicating patterns endlessly repeated" (282). His plane, which is running out of petrol, performs endless loops in the sky, announcing the imminent disaster of "something falling from the sky. Technology. Parts, bits" (5). This ending obviously sends us back to the beginning of the book, intimating a similar loop of readerly repetitions.

As Pieter Vermuelen has pointed out, "trauma, far from registering as a psychological event, is merely mobilized as a structural plot element […]; by indirectly funding the events that make up the story of the novel, [it] provides the novel with the narrative capital it needs to keep going for some 280 pages" (Vermuelen 2012, 551). Yet, what trauma seems to entail in *Remainder* is also an almost-literal 'fall' from an unmediated experience of reality into technological mediation and simulation, where the individual and authentic, incorporated into a limitless series of technological reproductions and duplicates, loses its claim to primacy.

This position finds a theoretical buttress in Jean Baudrillard's account of the rise of the age of simulation, in which the hyperreality of simulacra governs visual culture. The French philosopher's name almost invariably pops up in critical comments on *Remainder* (Nieland 2012, 578; Vermuelen 2012, 560) as providing a gloss on the practice of re-enactment, in particular on the episode of the simulated bank heist "slotted back into the world" (McCarthy 2005, 265) and turned into a real event: in Baudrillard's classic essay *Simulacra and Simulation* (1987) a simulated hold-up is indeed chosen as a test case to illustrate the postmodern inability to distinguish between reality and its artificial duplicates. To some, *Remainder* should thus been regarded as a paradigmatic novel of the contemporary 'media a priori'. Its obsessive repetitions, Mark Seltzer notes, are meant to foreground that both the world and its copies "consist in the zoned reenactments with the properties of the intensely staged" (Seltzer 2016, 159); or, as McCarthy's narrator differently phrases it: "the re-enactment zone was non-existent, or […] it was infinite, which amounted in this case to the same thing" (McCarthy 2005, 283). *Remainder* thus corroborates Baudrillard's view concerning the cinematic quality of life today: we are all cast as extras in a "global installation. […] We are all, from a global and interactive point of view, actors in this total world event" (Baudrillard 2005, 94).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

3 History Repeating

The trope of a life-sized representation of the real seems to have a particular resonance in contemporary culture. A telling case is that of Charlie Kauffmann's film *Synecdoche, New York* (2008), an uncanny double of *Remainder* that features a neurologically damaged protagonist who receives a large sum of money, which he then invests in constructing a stage set the size of a city to re-enact his own life. Although released after *Remainder*, the similarities between the film and the novel are so striking as to insinuate that the logic of the simulacrum no longer needs to distinguish between original and copy, 'before' and 'after'. Jill Partington observes that both could be "copies of one another: the film of the book is simultaneously the book of the film"; and again, given that in both the re-enactment project fails because it bleeds into real life, this further instantiates "the impossibility of locating authenticity in a world of simulations" (Partington 2016, 51).

Yet this framework, that the contemporary world is locked up in a perpetual present where the 'fallen' human is doomed to technological repetitions, does not need to be set nostalgically against a now-lost condition of authenticity. Opposing this self-defeating narrative, re-enactments have been recently valorized as a critical and historical practice in exhibitions like 'A Little Bit of History Repeated' (Kunstwerke, Berlin, 2001), 'Life, Once More' (Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2004), 'Re-' (Site Gallery, Sheffield, 2007), and 'History Will Repeat Itself: Strategies of Re-Enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance' (Hartware Medienkunstverein, Dortmund and Kunstwerke, Berlin, 2007). Opening the catalogue of 'History Will Repeat Itself' with a reference to McCarthy's *Remainder* (in which *History Repeating* is a song's title and iterated refrain; McCarthy 2005, 122), curator Inke Arns recasts artistic re-enactments as a way to re-examine and question passive consumptions of images and historical narratives. Because the re-enactment "transforms representation into embodiment", readers or viewers become witnesses or participants in a mediated action, while being encouraged to interrogate how memory and experience are continuously being restructured "not only by filmmakers and re-enactors but also by us personally, as mediated and mediating subjects" (Arns, Horn 2007, 63). The uncanny re-staging of situations and events, either by performance or through art installation, thus plays with doubles and spectral simulacra in the conviction that there is no umediated, original/originary reality to recover once the spell of the spectacle is broken. As McCarthy apodictically puts it: "We are always not just (to use a dramatic term) in *medias res*, i.e. in the middle of events, but also simply in media. In the beginning is the signal" (McCarthy 2012, 2).

Mediality and duplication in visual artists' re-enactments do not, then, simply point to a fake world shorn of authenticity. Consider, for instance, the looped repetitions and staged film sets that appear in Pierre Huyghe's

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

The Third Memory (1999) or Omer Fast's *Spielberg's List* (2003). Huyghe's re-enactment, which may well have been the background to McCarthy's final episode in *Remainder*, is inspired by Sidney Lumet's 1975 film *Dog Day Afternoon*, a fictionalised account of a bank robbery that had taken place in Brooklyn in August 1972. The installation consists in a two-channel video projection in which images of the robber's character in the film (played by Al Pacino) are juxtaposed with images filmed by Huyghe of the real robber, John Wojtowicz, as he now, twenty-five years after the fact, re-stages the heist in a reconstructed set. The looped double videos seem to oppose fact to fake, and we would expect 'reality' to take its revenge on 'fiction'. What is most striking, however, in Huyghe's re-enactment, is not only how Wojtowicz's recounting of the 1972 heist is now thoroughly mediated by the memory of Lumet's film. At one point in the video, Wojtowicz mentions that the day before the actual robbery, he and his gang watched *The Godfather* (starring Al Pacino) for inspiration, which suggests that even the 'original' unmediated fact was, in the first instance, already the spectral double of a filmic image. Huyghe's notion of re-enactment as a 'third memory' thus cuts across the divide between original and copy, past and present, while also rejecting the notion of an eternal, simulacral present unstuck in time. Rather, what comes to matter is the two-way traffic between an unattainable original event and its medial representation: the past is retroactively grasped only through a later repetition in the present, a present that is itself haunted by spectral returns. In Omer Fast's re-enactments, this disturbance of linear time is put to the test with particularly traumatic moments of history. *Spielberg's List* interrogates the Hollywood memory of the Holocaust by setting the filmed remnants of the set of the Plaszow concentration camp that was built for Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) against the remnants of the original camp, as well as the inhabitants of the region who had been working as extras in the film. Again the two-channel video installation raises the trope of doubling and the expectation that original and replica, past and present, may be sifted apart. Instead, in the interviews that Fast conducted with the Polish extras, the distinction between personal experience and acted role blurs, as one respondent abruptly shifts from a discussion of her own life in wartime Poland to some fifty years later when she acted in Spielberg's film. Given these spiraling interactions, and their connections with trauma and its aftermath, it comes perhaps as no surprise that it should have been Omer Fast to direct the filmic adaptation of McCarthy's *Remainder* (released in 2015), marking his debut in a feature film which can be regarded as an extension of his ongoing artistic explorations in authenticity, temporality and causality.

This disloyalty of re-enactments to the point of origin does not amount to historical relativism. In fact, it debunks the cult of newness and presentism. Asked in an interview about his affiliations with artistic re-enactments and whether these entail postmodern simulation, McCarthy replies:

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> I've read Baudrillard, but Plato said it all. The idea of the simulacra being a copy without an original, which is Baudrillard's big selling point – it's in the *Sophist* by Plato. Lots of people described *Remainder* as a very postmodern book, because there is this guy reenacting very stylized moments in a bid for authenticity, and in the postmodern era, they say, we don't have authenticity. But I was thinking as much of *Don Quixote*, the first novel, or one of the first novels, which is exactly the same. It is about a guy feeling inauthentic in 1605 and in a bid to acquire, to accede to authenticity, he reenacts moments from penny novels, the kind of TV of its day. So I think you have to be a bit careful about this cult of newness, the idea that somehow, post-about-1962, we're suddenly postmodern – It just ain't so. (Alizar 2008)

Elsewhere he includes *Tristram Shandy* among re-enactments, pointing to uncle Toby's re-staging of his trauma at Namur in 'installations' made on a bowling green (McCarthy 2017a, 94); and, of course, Hamlet's play within the play. What is at stake is not so much a question of literary lineage, or of gauging the impact of the past on (as Robert Hughes would put it) the 'shock of the new'. Renouncing the idea of an origin and originality implies, instead, reconsidering a presentist notion of the 'contemporary' and its concomitant fetish of newness. Steven Connor has, for instance, proposed that the contemporary would be best grasped as "con-temporal", a mixing of times together or "polytemporality", in which progression and recurrence are coiled together, and "the thread of one duration is pulled constantly through the loop formed by another, one temporality is strained through another's mesh" (Connor 2014, 31). Within this framework, a historical moment is never new, but riven through by spectral returns, anachronisms and an uncanny sense of *déjà vu*: the past is not surpassed, but revisited, repeated, reinterpreted and reshuffled. Similarly, in his essay *The Signature of All Things* (2009), Giorgio Agamben draws on Freud and on Walter Benjamin's anti-historicist stance to suggest that the looped temporality of trauma, made of repetitions, latencies and ghostly returns, is also a way of reactivating in the present what the past had left "non-lived and unexperienced". "Archeology", Agamben claims, "is the only way to gain access to the present" (Agamben 2009, 101-2), a claim that recalls what Benjamin, in *Excavation and Memory* (1932), had described as an archeological site which yields the past's secrets only by "returning again and again to the same matter":

> He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging. Above all, he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter. […] For the 'matter itself' is no more than the strata which yield their long-sought secrets only to the most meticulous investigation. That is to say, they yield those images that, severed from

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> all earlier associations, reside as treasures in the sober rooms of our later insights––like torsos in a collector's gallery. (Benjamin 2005, 576)

It is through this lens that we begin to grasp the contours of McCarthy's "archeology of the present" (Hart and Jaffe 2013, 671). Many of the programmatic statements in his manifestoes for the International Necronautical Society sound equally suspicious of positivist historicism and of "the Enlightenment's version of time as progress, a line growing stronger and clearer as it runs from past to future" (McCarthy and Critchley 2012, 269), Instead, McCarthy continues, "historically speaking, we advance not into new ground but over old ground in new ways: more consciously, with deeper, more nuanced understanding" (McCarthy and Critchley 2012, 271). His privileging of surfaces, flatness and spectral repetitions, most obvious in the rejection of psychological depth in favour of empty, traumatized subjectivity, matches his rejection of *historical* depth in favour of an "archeology of the present moment which goes back into the past through a series of interconnecting surfaces" (Hart and Jaffe 2013, 671). Indeed, one reason behind McCarthy's penchant for cinema is that, as he says, it is "about sequences crossing a flat surface" (Hart and Jaffe 2013, 670), which implicitly suggests that the media of cinema and of the novel, the screen and the written page, may be less far apart than we might think. Reading the new, postmodern, world against the grain of the past thus involves some reshuffling of medial history, a juxtaposition of Tarantino and Georges Méliès and a return to (and of) the terrain of emergence of 'inhuman' visual technologies in Modernism.

4 Déjà Vu

Remainder's traumatic encounter with technology is described as producing a reconfiguration of the human neuro-physiological makeup. Because of the accident, and the damage to the part of the brain that controls the motor functions of his body, the narrator is obliged to "rerout[e]" (McCarthy 2005, 19) his brain for commands to run along. Put more simply, even a banal gesture like lifting a carrot to his mouth has to be first visualized in all its complicated anatomical details ("which tendon does what, how each joint rotates, how angles, upward forces and gravity contend with and counterbalance each other"; McCarthy 2005, 20) and then enacted in his brain again and again and again until the brain learns how to perform the act itself. However, when the actual "twenty seven manoeuvres" involved in the gesture are enacted on a real carrot, the latter turns out to be, as he puts it, "more active" than him: "I'd thought of my hand, my fingers, my rerouted brain as active agents, and the carrot as a no-thing, a carved space for me to grasp and move" (McCarthy 2005, 20). Instead,

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the carrot bumps, and wrinkles and crawls, while "the surge of active carrot input scrambling the communication between brain and arm, firing off false contractions" (McCarthy 2005, 21) obliges him to repeat the whole protocol *n* times before he gets it right.

While obviously re-enacting Beckettian comedy (think of Vladimir's carrot in *Waiting for Godot* – Beckett is the only author mentioned in the novel; McCarthy 2005, 110) this episode introduces several important points. By showing the human as primordially permeable and mediated, it foregrounds that bodily gestures are not a 'natural', authentic state or way of life prior to mediation: immediacy and spontaneity are indeed the sedimented result of myriad repetitive practices. They are learnt through body techniques or technologies such as, for instance, the cinematic, through which the narrator will train his gestures in the re-enactments. The narrative of a 'fall' outside the authenticity of the human body into technology can thus be re-written in terms of a mutual engagement between the human and the material world. Indeed, the narrator cannot produce in his imagination the visual idea of a gesture and then act on it. Rather, he approaches a material world which affects the neural patterns of his brain: the active carrot's "input" information shows that the human and the world are engaged in a relationship of co-constitutivity, wherein as the human works on the world, the world works on the human as well.

The episode of the carrot's agency offers, on the one hand, a model for the narrator's enmeshment with other technological and medial networks, such as internet, bureaucracy, logistics, transport, and communication, which guarantee the smooth flow of life through the larger body of the metropolis: Naz, the Indian boss of the big company of 'facilitators' which help with the re-enactments, is described as prosthesis, "an extra set of limbs – eight extra sets of limbs, tentacles spreading out, in all directions, coordinating projects, issuing instructions, executing commands" (McCarthy 2004, 73). On the other hand, the carrot's resistance introduces the novel's innumerable images of matter, surplus matter, formless mess or clutter whose vibrant life continuously disrupts human schemes, as well as the very pattern/design of the self-enclosed human body. If the latter is turned into an automatic machine, the world itself turns into active animated matter: a bit of wiring unplugged from the wall looks like "a disgusting something that's come out of something", the disarticulated steps of an escalator are "lying messily like beached fish", the earth is "spilling a hundred bits all rolling around and staining things" (McCarthy 2005, 9, 17, 214). Lying on the street pavement as he re-enacts a crime scene in the victim's role, the narrator observes the street's surfaces "dripping layers of oil painting" like an old Dutch masterpiece, their faded markings "worn by time and light into faint echoes of the instructions they had once pronounced so boldly":

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> Chewing gum, cigarette butts and bottle tops had been distributed randomly across the area and sunk into its outer membrane, become one with tarmac, stone, dirt, water mud. If you were to cut ten square centimeters of it […] you'd find so much to analyse, so many layers, just so much *matter* – that your study of it would branch out and become endless, until, finally, you threw your hands up in despair and announced to whatever authority it was you were reporting to: *There's too much here, too much to process, just too much*. (McCarthy 2005, 187-8; italics in the original)

Remainder's mattering of matter is McCarthy's re-enactment of Modernism, in particular of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, a novel that to him "matters most, because it makes matter of everything" (McCarthy 2017b, 33). In McCarthy's view, those who praise Joyce's experimental interior monologue wholly miss the point. In fact, *Ulysses*'s "base materialism" renders "impossible a certain model of subjective, cognitive or literary mastery" (35), celebrating instead "exterior consciousness, embodied, or encorpsed – consciousness that has erupted conventional syntax's membrane, prolapsed" (38). What we have, in *Ulysses*, is therefore not 'humanist' literature at all. Rather, this is writing as *medium*, material marks inscribing on the space of the page a "recirculation of detritus in the form of things, images, events, its main instances of 'history repeating itself', as Bloom puts, it 'with a difference'" (47). Textuality is therefore reconfigured as visual and material re-enactment. Steven Dedalus's reflections on the flat screen of the visible world, and his walk on the beach to read "signatures of all things" as he treads on "a damp crackling mass, razorshells, squeaking pebbles" (Joyce 1986, 31, 34), is thus more than an echo in *Remainder*'s infinite layers of matter in the street's tarmac. And, as Laura Marcus has pointed out, this is something that Joyce and modernist literature got from Georges Méliès's trick films and the infancy of cinema (Marcus 2007, 92-3).

Whereas most studies of the dialogue between cinema and literature have insisted on narrativity and montage as their most obvious point of connection, recent interdisciplinary histories have emphasised, instead, the impact on the modernist imaginary of the neutral, anonymous recording of material life found in early trick films, chronophotography, and the actualities that dealt with familiar, everyday activities or incidents of general interest. These cinematic images eluded representation as they were not yet bound up with and into narrative (Trotter 2007, 5). What mattered was not the content, but rather the sheer filmability of movement and life itself, mimesis over meaning: the images were registered instantly, apparently without intermediary, and conveyed a sense of the immediacy of the real by means of "a minute examination of the realm of the contingent, persistently displaying the camera's aptitude for recording" (Doane 2002, 142). The teeming flatness of the screen offered an overwhelming flow of sense data where the physical world looked involved in protean defor-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

mations and unprecedented object-relations. Méliès's films, for instance, which were based on magic tricks of pure perception, elaborated "the instability of the phenomenal world" (Doane 2002, 135) in which objects and human beings had difficulty retaining their identity: inanimate materials, from objects to natural landscapes, were brought to life and endowed with agency and movement, while the human appeared mechanized, as bodily gestures were broken down into their component parts and either zoomed in through a physiologism of detail, or suspended in mid-air through stop-motion (Marcus 2007, 92). The visual technology of cinema exposed the inhuman within human experience, while revealing, as Tommaso Marinetti wrote in his *Technical Manifesto for Futurist Literature* (1912), "the movements of matter which are beyond the laws of human intelligence, and hence of an essence which is more significant" (Marinetti 2009, 122).

According to Thomas Trotter, what fascinated modernist writers about the technology of cinema was therefore "film as medium before film as art" (Trotter 2007, 4), a recorded image of life made automatically by a seemingly neutral, impersonal device, on a flat screen. Filmic images actually seemed to convey a novel techno-primitive language of the material world, which bizarely combined the flat, haptic visuality of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs with modern technologies of perception, inviting writers to take a new angle on language and the human as thus far constituted in the archive of representations (Trotter 2007, 10). It was this example of cinema that provoked, in some modernist writers, a similar "will to automatism" in the linguistic machine, "a stimulus to the reintroduction or re-enactment of the neutrality of literature, or in some cases of writing itself, as a medium"; in other words, a material notion of "literature as (recording) medium *before* literature as (representational) art" (Trotter 2007, 9, 5). What immediately comes to mind is the notion of impersonality most typically formulated by T.S. Eliot in *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. But this is also (anti-humanist) literature as the spacing of material marks on the page that McCarthy detects in *Ulysses*, or indeed in Mallarmé's celebrated constellation of typographic signs on the blank pages of *Un Coup de dés* (1897). McCarthy sees Mallarmé's "pacing out poetry as spacing" (McCarthy 2017b, 42) re-enacted in the text of *Ulysses*; he re-stages it in *Remainder*'s installations as well as in the whole book: a medium which, at the very end, invites us to replay it, to go back to the beginning and revisit its narrative space as we would, to recall Groys's metaphor of the 'novel as installation', an abandoned house haunted by a ghostly presence.

Within this framework, language itself is viewed as artificial: it is but another material technology and practice by which to engage with the world and with others in the world: McCarthy's narrator often refers to himself as a sponge in which words plant themselves and grow (McCarthy 2005, 6), in much the same way as the visual details of the remembered *déjà vu* are absorbed by his mind as "though by a worn, patterned sponge" (Mc-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Carthy 2005, 68). Throughout the novel, his obsession with the texture of words and letters (199-200), as well as with the ink that "vibrates" from the white paper in forensic traces (173), equally draws attention to the materiality of writing, the inscription of marks on the page as a form of 'indexical' recording that literature shares with cinema's indexicality: the phrase "everything must leave some kind of mark" is obsessively repeated like a mantra in *Remainder* (11, 94). And it is not by chance that the narrator relies on Naz, his facilitator in the contemporary medial network, to find out about words. Described as descending "from a long line of scribes, recorders, clerks, logging transactions and events, passing on orders and instructions that made new transactions happen" (73), Naz personifies the historical sedimentation of medial inscriptions from ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs down to the present, suggesting not a fall into medial technology and simulacra but, as McCarthy wryly comments, a way of circling back to where we should be: "with the advent of cinema we finally are back where we should be: we've found our way back, after several centuries of annoying humanism and perspectivism, to perfect flatness" (Hart, Jaffe 2013, 670).

The effect of modern technological devices capable of storing, transmitting and reproducing sense data was thus, and most importantly, to produce a "shift from idealist theories of aesthetic experience to materialist ones" (Danius 2002, 2): aesthetics recovered its original, etymological connection with the sensory infrastructure of the human body, and became invested with the notions of physiological immanence. Film, as Walter Benjamin was among the first to point out, was not for a disembodied sense of sight, but constituted a new training for the whole bodily sensorium, especially if one considers that the appeal of early cinema was to bodily rather than narrative identification. Discussing the internalisation of technologies of cinema in modernist fiction, Sara Danius points to a "closer relation between the sensuous and the technological" and to the "new perceptual and epistemic realms" of modernist literature influenced by visual technologies (2, 3). Joyce's epic of the material body in *Ulysses*, a book famously praised by Eisenstein for its training of visuality, is given pride of place as a "record of the modernist reinvention of the human body, particularly of the ways in which sensory habits are reconfigured" (152). But we may just as well consider T.S. Eliot's fascination for the automatic, nervous language of filmic gestures: the lines "It is impossible to say just what I mean! | But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen" in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (Eliot 1969, 16), suggest the desire for a technology that would "efface the inability to mean with words alone" (Parui 2013, 99) through the embodied formula of nervous gestures transcribed in patterns on a screen (Violi 2004).

The importance of filmic and filmed gestures in Modernism guides us to a better understanding of embodied repetition as McCarthy presents it in *Remainder*. The narrator's "rerouting" of his brain by breaking down bod-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

ily movements into their constituent parts (McCarthy 2005, 21) has been compared, albeit cursorily, to Eadweard Muybridge's chronophotographies of human locomotion (De Boever 2016, 204), which anticipated cinema by revealing the hidden gestures in movement's flow. But even more than early chronophotography, what gestural repetitions in *Remainder* seem to return us to is the neurophysiological aesthetics brought about in Modernism by the moving images of the cinematographic medium. Indeed, among the most fascinating aspects of cinema was film's exposure of what French filmmaker Jean Epstein described as the "astonishing geometry" of human gestures (Epstein 1926, 127) and of their interrelations with a sentient, animated environment, the gestures of things such as the banal, 'active' carrot we encounter in *Remainder*. To Epstein, the screen offered, on the one hand, myriad "angular interpretations" (127) of bodily movements, as gestures could be enlarged or reduced in size, multiplied or split, deformed or made expressive, foregrounding the kinaesthetic rhythms of sensuous, embodied cognition. Film, he wrote, was "nothing but a relay between this nervous energy and the auditorium which breathes its radiance. That is why the gestures which work better on screen are nervous gestures" (Epstein 1977, 12). On the other hand, this heightened awareness of the sensory texture of bodily movements was extended by film to the whole thing-world: on the screen, Epstein claimed, nothing is still, "objects take on airs. Trees gesticulate. Mountains [...] convey meanings. Every prop becomes a character" (Epstein 2012, 289), inducing human bodies to mimic and incorporate these gesticulations, to then re-launch them back as further gestures into the environment. The body was thus shown itself as a medial apparatus fully entangled with the world, and to Epstein, who was trained in medicine and science, cinema offered not some kind of entertainment or a new art form, but rather a mechanical brain, a way for human perception to penetrate into the very life of matter.

The intertwining of medicine, filmic technology and the medium of literature was crucial to the emergent aesthetics of gestures, and although this is, in itself, a subject that would take us too far afield, a brief outline of this conversation may give us a taste of the rich interdisciplinary terrain which resurfaces in McCarthy's medial archeology. In *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intelligence* (*Poetry Today, a New Form of Intelligence*, 1921), Epstein spurred literature to emulate from cinema this embodied form of intelligence. T.S. Eliot referred to Epstein's "brilliant" text in his own 1921 essay *The Metaphysical Poets* (Eliot 1932, 289), in which he famously evoked a "dissociation of sensibility" (288), borrowing from French neuropsychologist Pierre Janet the term 'dissociation', usually referred to the nervous, imitative gestures of hysteria, to describe his own poetry (Crawford 2015, 148). Janet, whose work on neuropathologies and trauma had been a constant reference for Eliot since his years of study in Paris (Marx 2011, 25-9), was a central figure in the elaboration of a novel

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

materialist aesthetics of automatic gestures. The rhythmical apprehension of bodily motion as embodied cognition – what *Remainder*'s narrator calls a "choreography" (McCarthy 2005, 230) of repeated gestures – was a recurring pursuit in French and American psychological studies of automatic gestures and behaviours. Besides Janet, we may recall the works of William James and Hugo Münstenberg at the Harvard laboratory of psychology (Violi 2004, 177-8), which Eliot became acquainted with in his years at Harvard, and whose impact on Gertrude Stein's poetics of cinematic repetition – "a rose is a rose is a rose" – has been already fully documented (Murphet 2003, 67-81; McCabe 2005, 56-92). In a lecture delivered at the Collège de France in 1923, Pierre Janet put forward the theory that

> what we call thought, or psychological phenomena, is not the function of any organ in particular: it is no more the function of the fingertips than it is a function of a part of the brain. The brain is only a set of switches, a set of devices which alter muscles affected by excitation. What we call 'ideas' or 'psychological phenomena' concern behaviour as a whole, they concern the individual taken as a whole. We think with our hands as well as with our brain, we think with our stomach, we think with everything. (quoted in Jousse 1925, 39)

A student of Janet's, the French anthropologist Marcel Jousse would further elaborate Janet's teachings into a veritable theory of rhythmic, automatic gestures as forms of thought, and of cinema as a mechanical brain that imitated and expanded the embodied cognition of the human medium; the human itself was actually described by Jousse as a "plastic camera which registers, conjugates gestures with his own body, with his hands, with the eye's muscles" (quoted in Grespi 2017, 63). James Joyce, who attended one of Jousse's lectures in late 1926 or early 1927, summarised it thus in *Finnegans Wake*: "In the beginning was the gest he jousstly says" (Joyce [1939] 1964, 468), sharing the anthropologist's idea of a gestural, cinematic matrix of language that *Finnegans Wake* kinetic bodies and writing would perform on the page's screen.

How does all this relate to McCarthy's re-enactor? In the light of this archeological approach, repetition is no longer a passive reiteration of inauthentic simulacra. Rather, repetition becomes an emulation of the cinematic brain in its capacity to penetrate the texture of material life: as the re-enactor puts it, slowing down movements and postures "at half speed" is a way of grasping "what was inside, intimate" (McCarthy 2005, 197). After all, the epitome of embodied modernity was Charlie Chaplin: T.S. Eliot praised the "rhythm" of his neurasthenic gestures (Trotter 2007, 184), Jousse extolled Chaplin's technique of repeating a gesture take after take after take, until it felt like a second nature (Grespi 2017, 50). As Trotter astutely observes, Chaplin's automatic imitation for imitation's sake has

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

therefore “more life in it than non-mechanical behaviour” (Trotter 2007, 196). In this respect, McCarthy’s traumatized narrator seems to belong to a host of Chaplinesque characters that culminate in Samuel Beckett’s automatized neurotic bodies, caught in perpetual loops of useless gestures or postures that, as Ulrika Maude has shown (2009), enact Beckett’s ongoing concern with embodiment and sensory perception, especially in relation to modern auditory and visual technologies. The re-enactment of the *déjà vu* in *Remainder* may thus be recast as both a repetition of and a visual update on, for instance, *Krapp’s Last Tape* (1957), as both Beckett and McCarthy probe the enmeshment between the human medium and the spools or reels of media technologies.

Re-enacting the past is, in McCarthy, the closest we get to experiencing the present. Both in the archeological gesture of digging up history through re-enactments and in *Remainder*’s embodied repetitions, there remain little material left-overs, the residual extra 1⁄2 of the 8 (∞) million that clogs the smooth perfection of the looped duplications. In line with the Beckettian logic of productive failure, this is where repetition also re-activates unlived potentials and the virtuality of future pasts, whether in bodily or in cultural gestures. To *Remainder*’s narrator, these are the unexpected, affective thrills produced by little contingent swerves in the automatisms of re-enactments, when bodily gestures release the unexperienced within their sedimented patterns (see, for instance, McCarthy 2005, 134-5). To us, it is an invitation from McCarthy to re-think the future of the novel by re-enacting the unfulfilled potentials of its intermedial history. Re-run and re-read.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio (2009). *The Signature of all Things*. New York: Zone Books.

Alizar, Mark (2008). “Interview with Tom McCarthy”. *The Believer*. URL `http://www.believermag.com/issues/200806/?read=interview_mcarthy` (2018-08-12).

Arns, Inke; Horn, Gaby (eds) (2007). *History Will Repeat Itself. Strategies of Re-enactment in Contemporary (Media) Art and Performance*. Frankfurt am Main: Revolver, 37-63.

Aronowitz, Stanley (1994). *Dead Artists, Live Theories, and Other Cultural Problems*. London: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203060889`.

Baudrillard, Jean (2005). *The Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays*. Edited by Sylvère Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e)/MIT Press.

Benjamin, Walter (2005). “Excavation and Memory”. Bullock, Marcus; Jennings, Paul; William, Michael; Eiland, Howard; Smith, Gary (eds),

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 2, pt. 2. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 576.
Colombino, Laura (2013). *Spatial Politics in Contemporary London Literature*. London: Routledge. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203553411.
Connor, Steven (2014). "The Impossibility of the Present: or, from the Contemporary to the Contemporal". Luckhurst, Roger; Marks, Peter (eds), *Literature and the Contemporary*. London; New Yorwk: Routledge, 15-35. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315840680-3.
Crawford, Robert (2015). *Young Eliot: From St. Louis to The Waste Land*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Danius, Sara (2002). *The Senses of Modernism. Technology, Perception and Aesthetics*. Ithaca (US); London: Cornell University Press.
De Boever, Arne (2016). "Tom McCarthy's Remainder and 'the Great Outdoors'". Duncan, Dennis (ed.), *Tom McCarthy. Critical Essays*. Canterbury: Gylphi, 201-26.
Doane, Mary Ann (2002). *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1932). "The Metaphysical Poets". *T.S. Elliot: Selected Essays*. London: Faber & Faber, 281-91.
Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1969). "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". *T.S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays*. London: Faber & Faber.
Epstein, Jean (1926). "L'objectif lui-même". *Écrits sur le cinéma 1921-1947*. Paris: Seghers, 127-30.
Epstein, Jean (1977). "Magnification and Other Writings". *October*, 3, 9-25. DOI https://doi.org/10.2307/778434.
Epstein, Jean (2012). "Le Cinématographe vu de l'Etna". Keller, Sarah; Paul, Jason N. (eds), *Jean Epstein. Critical Essays and New Translations*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 287-92. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048513840-020.
Grespi, Barbara (2017). *Il cinema come gesto*. Roma: Aracne.
Groys, Boris (2018). "The Installation as Novel". Bishop, Tom; Grau, Donatien (eds), *Ways of Re-Thinking Literature*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 55-62. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315560489-7.
Hart, Matthew; Jaffe, Aaron (2013). "An Interview with Tom McCarthy". *Contemporary Literature*, 54(4), 657-82. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/cli.2013.0048.
Joyce, James [1939] (1964). *Finnegans Wake*. London: Faber & Faber.
Joyce, James [1922] (1986). *Ulysses*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
Jousse, Marcel (1925). *Le style oral rythmique et mnémotechnique chez les verbomoteurs*. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne Éditeur.
Kirsch, Adam (2010). "What is the Future of Avant-Garde Fiction? Read Tom McCarthy's *C* and Find Out". *Slate*, 13 September 2010.
Marcus, Laura (2007). *The Tenth Muse. Writing about Cinema in the Modernist Period*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Marinetti, Tommaso (2009). "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature". Rainey, Lawrence; Poggi, Christine; Wittman Laura (eds), *Futurism. An Anthology*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 119-25.
Marx, William (2011). "Paris". *T.S. Eliot in Context*. Edited by Jason Harding. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 25-32.
Maude, Ulrika (2009). *Beckett, Technology and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
McCabe, Susan (2005). *Cinematic Modernism. Modernist Poetry and Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
McCarthy, Tom (2005). *Remainder*. London: Alma Books.
McCarthy, Tom (2012). *Transmission and the Individual Remix*. London: Jonathan Cape.
McCarthy, Tom; Critchley, Simon (2012). *The Mattering of Matter*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
McCarthy, Tom (2017a). "Tristram Shandy". *Typewriters, Bombs, and Jellyfish*. New York: New York Review Books, 77-97.
McCarthy, Tom (2017b). "Why Ulysses Matters". *Typewriters, Bombs, And Jellyfish*. New York: New York Review Books, 21-48.
Morgan, Catrin (2010). *Phantom Settlements*. London: Ditto.
Murphet, Julian (2003). "Gertrude Stein's Machinery of Perception". Murphet, Julian; Rainford, Lydia (eds), *Literature and Visual Technologies. Writing after Cinema*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 67-81. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230389991_5`.
Murphet Julian; Rainford, Lydia (eds) (2003). *Literature and Visual Technologies. Writing after Cinema*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230389991`.
Nieland, Justus (2012). "Dirty Media: Tom MCarthy and the Afterlife of Modernism". *Modern Fiction Studies*, 58(3), 569-99.
Oates, Joyce Carol (2007). "Lest We Forget". *New York Review of Books*, 19 July, 47-50.
Partington, Gill (2016). "Dummy Chambers and Ur-Houses. How to Find Your Way Around *Remainder*". Duncan, Dennis (ed.), *Tom McCarthy. Critical Essays*. Canterbury: Gylphi, 47-67.
Parui, Avishek (2013). "'The Nerves in Patterns on a Screen': Hysteria, Hauntology and Cinema in T.S. Eliot's Early Poetry from *Prufrock* to *The Waste Land*". McParland, Robert P. (ed.), *Film and Literary Modernism*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 96-106.
Seltzer, Mark (2016). *The Official World*. Durham; London: Duke University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822374459`.
Smith, Zadie (2008). "Two Paths for the Novel". *New York Review of Books*, 20 November, 89-95.
Trotter, Thomas (2007). *Cinema and Modernism*. Oxford: Blackwell.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Vermuelen, Pieter (2012). “The Critique of Trauma and the Afterlife of the Novel in Tom McCarthy’s *Remainder*”. *Modern Fiction Studies*, 58(3), 549-68. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2012.0056.

Violi, Alessandra (2004). *Il teatro dei nervi. Fantasmi del moderno da Mesmer a Charcot*. Milano: Mondadori.

Section 2
Passions, Emotions and Cognition in Eighteenth-century Literature (Part 2)

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

The Fear of Laughter in Restoration Prose Fiction

Jorge Figueroa-Dorrego
(Universidade de Vigo, España)

Abstract This article draws on recent studies on the fear of derisive laughter (or 'gelotophobia') in order to relate them to early modern comments on laughter and to the representation of that anxiety in some texts of Restoration prose fiction, and with a particular emphasis on Alexander Oldys's *The Fair Extravagant* (1682). Gelotophobia is a variant of shame anxiety and a social phobia defined as the pathological fear of being an object of laughter. Although the fear shown in the texts analysed is not pathological, it certainly reveals the strong pressure of the shame culture and gender politics prevailing in Restoration England.

Keywords Gelotophobia. Theory of laughter. Social shame. Restoration prose fiction. Alexander Oldys.

1 Introduction[1]

A fairly recent development in humour research is the study of the fear of being an object of laughter, mostly from a psychological perspective. In the nineties psychotherapist Michael Titze coined the term 'gelotophobia' to refer to that pathology, using the Greek words *gelos* (laughter) and *phobia* (fear). And in the last ten years there has been a remarkable increase in the studies on this matter that have led, for instance, to the publication of special issues in journals such as *Humor* (2009) and *Psychological Test and Assessment Modeling* (2010). Among these publications, the work of Willibald Ruch and René Proyer has been crucial for the expansion from a clinical perspective to a wider conceptualisation of gelotophobia as an individual differences phenomenon, because it only becomes pathological when it appears without sufficient cause, with extraordinary intensity, and during a long period of time. And there is a wide range of possibilities, from little to extreme fear of being laughed at (Ruch 2009, 6-8).

1 I wish to acknowledge funding for his research from the Spanish government (MINECO project ref. FFI2015-68376-P), the Junta de Andalucía (project ref. P11-HUM-7761), and the Xunta de Galicia (Rede de Lingua e Literatura Inglesa e Identidade III, ref. ED431D2017/17).

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/007
Submitted: 2018-10-27 | Accepted: 2018-11-26

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

What I intend to do in this article is to draw on that recent research on gelotophobia and on more general studies of laughter and the social aspect of humour in order to apply them to an analysis of the representation of the fear of derisive laughter in early modern English prose fiction, with a particular emphasis on Alexander Oldys's *The Fair Extravagant* (1682). I will start with some additional words about gelotophobia, then I will connect this to comments on laughter written by authors such as Philip Sidney, Robert Burton, John Dryden, Thomas Hobbes, Isaac Barrow, and Joseph Addison; and, finally I will focus on the anxiety caused by the scornful laughter that some characters of Restoration novels suffer, as well as the relationship that this has with the shame culture and gender ideology prevailing at the time.

2 Shame and the Fear of Laughter

Ridicule may induce negative emotions, like shame or anger. While we all may feel more or less upset when we are ridiculed, gelotophobes develop a habitual fear of laughter (Platt, Ruch 2009, 91-2). This happens also when the laugher intends no harm and is just being playful. Gelotophobes tend to experience laughter as something negative, as a means that others use in order to put them down (Proyer, Ruch 2010, 50).[2] This hypersensitivity towards others' laughter is due to a low level of self-esteem and a high level of shame; it reveals a combination of neurotic and paranoid tendencies (see Ruch, Proyer 2009, and Titze 2009). Gelotophobes tend to be emotionally unstable and introverted and, consequently, try to avoid social situations in which they may feel ashamed and insecure. Possible causes of gelotophobia may include physical appearance deviating from the norm, having certain disabilities, unorthodox behaviour or attitudes, or lack of familiarity with habits and cultural peculiarities. And its consequences may be introversion, social withdrawal, low life satisfaction, low self-esteem, low cheerfulness, depression, and difficulty in regulating emotions in general (Ruch et al. 2014, 33-8).

According to Titze (2009, 29-30), gelotophobia is a variant of shame-bound anxiety and a social phobia. Shame-bound anxiety is the result of an excessive self-observation and self-control, and is related to feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and self-contempt. Individuals with this kind of anxiety expect rejection by others, and this impairs their interpersonal relationships. They believe their actions are often ridiculous and fear humiliation as a punishment for their failures.

2 According to Titze (2009, 31), "[t]he general state of gelotophobes is 'agelatic', i.e., they are not able to appreciate the benefits of laughter", because they do not interpret it as "a positive element of shared identity" or as a relaxing and joyful experience.

A social phobia is a persistent fear of one or more social situations in which a person is exposed to possible scrutiny by others. The individual is afraid that s/he will act in an embarrassing or humiliating manner, so they endure those situations with intense anxiety or try to avoid them altogether. Therefore, the concept of social phobia overlaps with that of shame, and gelotophobia is related to both concepts. Recent studies have argued that shame is a self-regulation emotion crucial to social control, and that it is an innate affect that inhibits and interrupts pleasure (Platt, Ruch 2009, 93). The manner in which people use and interpret laughter is often an important element in this process, because laughing may be used to repel and try to correct deviant actions. This way, it may have an aggressive, corrective function, which attempts to bring non-conforming individuals into line and to reinforce group homogeneity (Ruch, Proyer 2009, 49; Titze 2009, 34). In 1900 Henri Bergson already pointed out that laughter could be a form of social control, intending to uphold conventions and order: "[o]ur laughter is always the laughter of a group", as it always implies a complicity with other laughers, either real or imaginary (1980, 64). Therefore, it has a social signification. It is "a sort of *social gesture*. By the fear which it inspires, it restrains eccentricity" (73; italics in the original). It may correct manners through the humiliation of those who deviate from the opinions, likes and conducts of the social group the laughers belong to, or that prevail in society in general. In Bergson's words:

> Laughter is, above all, a corrective. Being intended to humiliate, it must make a painful impression on the person against whom it is directed. By laughter, society avenges itself for the liberties taken with it. It would fail in its object if it bore the stamp of sympathy or kindness. (187)

Many researchers of the late twentieth century insisted on the social function of humour, for instance William Martineau, who argues that

> [h]umor is used to express grievances or can be directed at someone in the group who either has not learned or has violated the norms of the group. Humor constitutes a symbol of disapproval – a subtle way of sanctioning the deviant [...] Humor, therefore, acts as a safety valve for expressing grievance or controlled hostility against deviance. The result is that the normative system is reinforced and social cohesion prevails. (1972, 117)[3]

3 Some humour theorists, such as John Morreall, also highlight the social value of laughter but from a different point of view. "Laughing together unites people" (Morreall 1983, 115) because humour facilitates social interaction. For instance, it is often used to set up a mood of acceptance when meeting new acquaintances, or when speaking in public. It may help to avoid confrontation.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Dolf Zillman and Joanne Cantor postulate the so-called "disposition theory" of humour, which posits that, in cases of disparagement humour, "appreciation varies inversely with the favourableness of the disposition toward the agent or entity being disparaged, and varies directly with the favourableness of the disposition toward the agent or entity disparaging it" (1976, 100-1) – in other words, we laugh more when we dislike the person or thing being debased and when we like the individual or medium that ridicules them. Literary scholar James English also follows Bergson's views on the social aspect of laughter, and contends that comic transactions are always related to the conflicts of social life, the relationships of solidarity and hierarchy, and the heterogeneity of society. The comic object belongs to a particular group of society whose symbolic denigration or exclusion provokes the laughter of a group hostile to it (English 1994, 9-10).

More modern social identity theories similarly argue that one of the means that the different groups in society use for attaining "positive distinctiveness", i.e. recognition, is disparagement humour, which involves "the denigration, derogation, or belittlement of a given target" (Ferguson, Ford 2008, 296 and 283). More recently, Thomas Ford has defended the prejudiced norm theory, according to which disparagement humour may be a releaser of prejudice, a medium for communicating derision of social groups. When we receive a humorous message, we abandon the standard mode of information processing for a non-critical humour mindset, thus disparagement humour diminishes its target, particularly when we are prejudiced against the disparaged group and, as a consequence, we tend to assent to a prejudiced norm in the immediate social context. Besides, disparagement humour evokes a shared understanding of its implicit message among those who approve of it and, therefore, can easily adopt that non-critical mindset. That is to say, humour discourse entails a sort of social contract among those who participate in it (Ford, Richardson, Petit 2015, 174-7).

Christie Davies (2009, 54-9) maintains that people are afraid of being laughed at, particularly, in societies where the main means of social control is shame, since those that are considered cases of misconduct may result in disgrace, contempt, or exclusion. In these honour-centred, hierarchical societies, individuals worry about the way in which they are perceived by others, and how this may affect their own lives and those of their relatives, friends, or colleagues. Davies believes that the fear of derision is less pressing in individualistic, capitalist, democratic societies, where notions of honour, status, and group identity are not so important. However, the fact that there are still serious cases of gelotophobia nowadays in Western countries indicates that such a concern about public perception and group identity is still relevant (see Ruch et al. 2014, 28-9, 40). Be that as it may, what seems undeniable is the relationship between shame and the fear of derisive laughter. Analysing shame and guilt cultures, Millie Creighton (1990, 285, 289) states that shame involves the

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

awareness of inadequacy or failure to achieve a wished-for self-image, which is accompanied by, or arises from, the fear of separation or of being placed in an inferior position within a group. Creighton contends that some degree of shame may be beneficial for the individual psyche because it creates social cohesion (1990, 292). Similarly, Peter Hacker (2017, 206) explains that shame is originated by the loss of face felt when one is seen in an indecorous condition or engaged in an activity that reveals one's failure to attain certain standards of competence, or when one fails to live up to standards of the honour code of one's peer group and that one accepts oneself. Exposure leads to humiliation and loss of honour and self-esteem. Hacker continues: "[o]ne is made an object of contempt and ridicule. One becomes exposed to the taunts and insults of others. One may be subjected to a life of abject misery from which, in extremis, the only escape may be suicide or becoming an outcast" (206). Consequently, shame is "a powerful and often terrible form of social control" (212), one that is often exerted through laughter, so no wonder people dislike and may even be afraid of being laughed at.

3 The Fear of Laughter in Early Modern England

The way laughter was conceived in early modern England was not very different from that in classical times, when it was normally seen as a form of disparagement (see Figueroa-Dorrego, Larkin-Galiñanes 2009; Sanders 1995). Most early comments about comedy, jesting, or laughter-related topics were concerned only with derisive laughter. For example, in *An Apology for Poetry* (1595), Philip Sidney defines comedy as: "an imitation of the common errors of our life, which [the comic writer] representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one" (1973, 117). Thus he connects it with ridicule, scorn, and shame. Sidney also argues that we laugh at other people's mistakes and mishaps, and derive a kind of "scornful tickling", i.e. a sort of pleasure from such derision. Thus it is easy to infer the displeasure the butts of ridicule may derive from laughter, according to Sidney. So, following Aristotle, he recommends not to laugh at respectable or miserable people or at execrable matters.[4]

4 In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines comedy as an imitation of "the Ridiculous, which is a species of the Ugly" and refers to "a mistake or deformity not productive of pain or harm to others" (1984, 229). In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle describes wit, the most refined and only acceptable type of humour for him, as "well-bred insolence" (1984, 123). Speakers may attempt to make their listeners laugh in order to gain their attention and goodwill, because humoristic discourse tends to be surprising, amusing, touching and, therefore, effective. Yet, this must be done with moderation, tact, and respect in order to avoid upsetting the butts or the listeners.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

This Aristotelian view of comedy continued during the Restoration period, combined with Ben Jonson's theory and practice of humours characterization. In *Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay* (1668), John Dryden states that, among English dramatists, humour is

> some extravagant habit, passion, or affection, particular […] to some one person: by the oddness of which, he is immediately distinguish'd from the rest of men; which being lively and naturally represented, most frequently begets that malicious pleasure in the Audience which is testified by laughter: as all things which are deviation from common customs are ever the aptest to produce it. (1997, 61)

Therefore, Dryden considers laughter a sign of "malicious pleasure" that is normally caused by the perception of deviant behaviour. In comedy, this laughter is produced by the presentation of humorous characters showing the imperfections of human nature. Although for Dryden the main purpose of comedy is to entertain the audience, we may suppose that the aim of exposing man's frailties is to correct them. His fellow playwright Thomas Shadwell insists more on the instructive aim of comedy. In his preface to *The Humourists* (1671), he claims that he intends "to reprehend some of the Vices and Follies of the Age, which I take to be the most proper and most useful way of writing Comedy" (1997, 86). He holds that comic dramatists must "render their Figures of Vice and Folly so ugly and detestable to make people hate and despise them" (86), and that to ridicule characters such as fops and knaves is much greater punishment than a tragic ending because it is related to shame. This gives evidence of the power awarded to scornful laughter.

From a different perspective, Robert Burton explains in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) how bitter jokes can motivate a feeling of dejection. He states that powerful people are often vexed by libels and satires, and that friendship is frequently ignored by those who only think of showing off their wit in indiscriminate derision. Burton warns that "[a] bitter jest, a slander, a calumny, pierceth deeper than any loss, danger, bodily pain, or injury whatsoever […]. Many men are undone by this means, moped, and so dejected, that are never to be recovered" (2001, 341). He argues that there are people who are more vulnerable to the harmful effect of derisive laughter because they are oversensitive and more prone to melancholy. This may be considered an early awareness of gelotophobia. Burton agrees with Sidney that sarcasm and scurrilous humour ought not to be used against our betters or people in distress. However, he approves of mirthful laughter, which may actually be a good remedy for melancholy and a source of joy and good health, so he ends his argumentation with

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the following couplet: “Play with me, but hurt me not: | Jest with me, but shame me not” (2001, 342).[5]

Yet the most influential comments on laughter in early modern England are those of Thomas Hobbes in both his *Human Nature* (1650) and *Leviathan* (1651). In the former, Hobbes claims that people often laugh “at mischances and indecencies” as well as “at the infirmities of others, by comparison of which their own abilities are set off and illustrated” (1994, 54). According to Hobbes, we never laugh when people deride us or our friends. So he concludes that

> the passion of laughter is nothing else but a sudden glory arising from sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmities of others, or with our own formerly […]. It is no wonder therefore that men take it heinously to be laughed at or derided, that is, triumphed over. (Hobbes 1994, 54-5)

Therefore, Hobbes sees laughter as a passion that involves a feeling of superiority and triumph in those who laugh, and one of shame and defeat in those who are laughed at. This view of laughter fits the general conception that this philosopher has of man as a creature who is constantly striving for superiority over others (Heyd 1982, 286). In *Leviathan*, Hobbes insists on the same explanation for the passion of ‘sudden glory’ that produces laughter in humans. He adds that laughing at other people’s flaws is “a sign of Pusillanimity”, mediocrity, and lack of sympathy, because “great minds” tend to be compassionate and helpful rather than derisive, and “compare themselves only with the most able” rather than with those who have defects or are less gifted (Hobbes 1973, 27). Hobbes’s description of laughter is the height of the so-called ‘superiority theory’ of humour and a crucial reference (no matter how modulated) both in eighteenth-century comments about laughter and in present-day studies on the social aspects of humour. For instance, Richard Steele seems to agree with Hobbes when he says, in his epilogue to *The Lying Lover* (1704), that laughter is “a distorted passion, born | Of sudden self-esteem and sudden scorn” (1973, 368). And, in *The Spectator*, no. 249 (December 15, 1711), Joseph Addison argues that Hobbes’s explanation of laughter holds in most cases, and that is why vain, ungenerous, nagging people are most prone to laughing at others. Addison finds this particularly worrying when those who are derided are worthy, decent people. However, “[i]f the talent of ridicule were employed to laugh men out of vice and folly, it might be of some use to the world” (Addison 1973, 379).

5 Burton elaborates his defence of mirth as a remedy against dejection in partition 2, section 2, member 6, subsection IV of his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In this case, laughter is part of pleasant, playful conversation in cheerful company, which may expel grief and gladden the heart (2001, 119-26).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

A very interesting – though largely ignored – early modern approach to humour is that defended by Isaac Barrow in one of his *Several Sermons on Evil-Speaking* (1678), entitled "Against Foolish Talking and Jesting". This is not the typical patristic or puritan diatribe against laughter and joking, as the title may lead us to think. Instead, Barrow argues that St Paul never meant to forbid all types of jocular discourse.[6] Barrow contends that there is one that is mirthful, harmless, and compliant with good manners and Christian duty. He argues that Christians must not be barred from mirth, which is a kind of natural, wholesome, and useful pleasure, because it may recreate our minds when tired, raise our spirits when they are low, sweeten our conversation, and "endear society" (Barrow 1678, 47). Besides, humour may be instructive and, therefore, profitable, because it may expose base and vile things: "It is many times expedient, that things really ridiculous should appear such, that they may be sufficiently loathed and shunned" (49). Facetious discourse may also be a convenient resource "for reproving some vices, and reclaiming some persons" (50-1), because it is often more efficient than other – harsher, more critical – forms of discourse. This is because people "scorn to be formally advised or taught, but they may perhaps be slyly laughed and lured into a better mind" (52), particularly if the admonition comes from relatives or friends who intend no harm nor rejection.

However, if the laughter-raising comment or situation is abusive and hurtful, and causes the feelings of displeasure and dejection, then it is uncivil and unacceptable. Among other things, Barrow points out:

> The Reputation of men is too noble a sacrifice to be offered up to vain-glory, fond pleasure, or ill-humour; it is a good far more dear and precious, than to be prostituted for idle sport and divertisement. It becometh us not to trifle with that which in common estimation is of so great moment; to play rudely with a thing so very brittle, yet of so vast price; which being once broken or crackt, it is very hard, and scarce possible, to repair. (Barrow 1678, 67)

So he is aware that ridicule may cause a feeling of loss of honour that may affect people's lives seriously. Therefore, derisive laughter is too harmful to be acceptable. Shaming and dishonouring people by making them a laughingstock is an uncivil, unchristian practice, and this is one of the types of jesting that St Paul forbids in his Epistle to the Ephesians.

In her study of gender and class in early modern England, Susan Amussen (1988) has demonstrated that English society at that time was still

6 Barrow's sermon intends to provide a new interpretation of St Paul's advice to the Ephesians: "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient" (Ephesians 5:4).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

dominated by strict notions of honour, reputation, and social order. In other words, it was a kind of shame culture where public perception confirmed or withheld an acceptable identity. Focusing on masculinity, Mark Breitenberg (1996) and Elizabeth Foyster (1999) have shown that, in spite of the power and pervasiveness of patriarchy, masculinity was very unstable and dependent on women's actions and the opinion of others. Keith Thomas gives plenty of evidence of how the political and religious authorities of the time saw mockery as a threat to the social order. He claims that "in its affirmation of shared values, laughter could be a powerful source of social cohesion. […] mockery and derision were indispensable means of pressuring established values and condemning unorthodox behaviour" (1977, 77). He contends that Tudor and Stuart England was "a harshly intolerant popular culture, hostile to privacy and eccentricity, and relying on the sanction not of reason but of ridicule" (77). People in general were afraid of the social shame produced by ridicule, at an age when honour and reputation were the all-powerful standards ruling life in society.[7] Legal and social practices such as the stocks, the pillory, the ducking stool, and the charivari demonstrate the intimate relationship between punishment, laughter, and opprobrium in this period. Jest-books promoted derisive laughter against all forms of deviant people, and 'others' in general – such as foreigners, cripples, madmen, women, and members of the lower classes. As was said before, comedy was used with the (real or pretended) aim of exposing and correcting follies, affectations, and eccentricities. To this we can add other literary genres such as satire, lampoon, libel, and epigram, in which ridicule is also linked to public shame.

4 The Fear of Laughter in Restoration Prose Fiction

Early modern prose fiction also provides a large number of examples of disparagement humour. As happens in jest-books, in picaresque fiction, rogue pamphlets and criminal biographies (genres that often overlapped in England, see Salzman 1985, 202-40) characters are very often cheated, and laughed at as a consequence. For example, in George Fidge's *The English Gusman* (1652), the thief James Hind is presented as a trickster who robs and plays pranks. One of his victims is a London citizen to whom he sells his horse but later escapes with it. When the citizen tells the incident to some people expecting some sympathy, he is jeered instead, and

7 Joy Wiltenburg has recently collected and commented on several early modern documents showing "how powerfully ridicule could generate fear of becoming its target" (2016, 36). One of the quotations she provides is from one of Dorothy Osborne's letters to her husband, in which she acknowledges: "I confess that I have an humour that will not suffer me to expose myself to people's scorn" (37).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

he despondently asks them: “Gentlemen, forbear, for this is worse than the loss of all, to be laughed at” (1652, 6). The sequential structure of this narrative, as happens in all rogue fiction of the time, does not allow us to know much more about this character. However, his words clearly evince how much taunting laughter afflicts this London citizen. For him, being jeered (i.e. publicly humiliated) is worse than losing his property. This episode also shows the laughers’ lack of compassion towards someone who has been robbed. They callously prefer to disparage the victim for having been so easily outwitted by Hind, who is thus placed in a position of intellectual superiority.

Similarly, in the anonymous *The London Jilt* (1683), Cornelia’s father is cheated and robbed by a rope dancer who laughs at him before leaving him on the floor with a broken leg. When the news is told, the neighbours also laugh at his folly and at his wife’s angry reaction. From then on, his business and marriage life go so bad that he gets depressed and dies shortly afterwards. In this case, the distress caused by derisive laughter is so extreme that it leads to dejection and eventual death, which reminds us of both Hacker’s and Burton’s words mentioned above. Moreover, in one of the episodes of this picaresque novel, Squire Limberham foolishly pretends to be the father of his wife’s chambermaid in order to rebut speculations of his being impotent because he has no children. As a consequence, he is accused and tried for adultery, and sentenced to pay 50 guineas to the maid. The heroine-narrator says: “This Sentence was very much commended by all People, and Squire Limberham’s Traffick was so laught at by all People, that for a while he durst hardly appear abroad, for the Affair was so publick that the whole Town pointed at him” (Anon. 2007, 66). Shamed by society due to his foolishness and what is considered deficient masculinity, the squire ostracises himself, unable to cope with that social pressure marked by laughter. As was said before, low self-esteem, introversion, and social withdrawal are usual consequences of gelotophobia.

Characters afraid of derisive laughter and of the effect that it may have in their reputation can also be found in some novels by Aphra Behn. In *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-87), Octavio is particularly sensitive to the manner in which his affair with Silvia may affect the public opinion about him. When, in the second part of this novel, she sends him a letter saying that, as Philander has been unfaithful to her, she is now free and willing to accept his love vows, he writes her back confessing that he is too weak to resist her charms, even if it is

> only to draw me from a Virtue which has been hitherto the Pride and Beauty of my youth, the Glory of my name, my Comfort and refuge in all extreams of Fortune: The eternal Companion, Guide and Counsellor of all my actions: Yet this good you only have power to rob me of, and leave me expos’d to the scorn of all the laughing World. (Behn 1993, 203)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Octavio is the only upright character in the cynical world of this novel, so dominated by infidelity, selfishness, and betrayal. He has built a good reputation over the years that he is worried to lose by starting this liaison with Silvia. Although his infatuation proves to be stronger than his apprehensions, his fears of becoming the butt of scornful laughter attest to his feeling of shame for having failed to maintain the positive self-image that he has created. When Silvia later resumes her affair with Philander, Octavio complains to her in another letter in the third part of the novel: "tell me how thou has undone me thus? Why thou shouldest chuse out me from all the Crowd of fond admiring Fools, to make the World's Reproach, and turn to ridicule" (369). So, Octavio verbalises again his fears of being laughed at by people, this time because he has been jilted by a young girl who has been seduced by her brother-in-law, Philander, who is also Octavio's friend. This obviously casts doubts on his masculinity and damages his good social reputation. His soft, amorous nature makes him dote on her so much that he has neglected his business; so his friends and relatives criticise him for "having given himself over to Effeminacy" (280). He finally decides to forget about her and enter a monastery, which symbolises the social death that disrepute implies. Thus, his affair with Silvia shows a clear reversal of gender roles of the usual treatment of the seduction theme in Restoration and eighteenth-century prose fiction.[8]

In Behn's *The History of the Nun: or The Fair Vow-Breaker* (1689), Isabella shows her anxiety about being the object of public derision in two crucial moments of the story. First when she, shortly after becoming a nun, falls in love with Henault. That presents her with a serious dilemma for which she finds no easy satisfactory solution:

> she cannot fly from the Thoughts of the Charming *Henault*, and 'tis impossible to quit em; and, at this rate, she found, Life could not long support it self, but would either reduce her to Madness, and so render her an hated Object of Scorn to the Censuring World, or force her Hand to commit a Murder upon her self. (Behn 1995, 225-6)

Isabella is afraid of the emotional instability that she may suffer if she represses her feelings towards Henault due to the vows of chastity she has recently made. An insane nun, crazy with love, would not be accepted by the society of the time, and would be the victim of public censure and scornful laughter.

As Bergson (1980), Martineau (1972) and other commentators on the social function of laughter have argued, people use laughter as a sign

8 On the seduction theme, see Ballaster (1992). On Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*, see, for instance, Pollak 1993, Todd 1996, Ballaster 2004, and Ahern 2005.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

of disapproval, in order to expose, humiliate, and correct the deviant. Isabella finally resolves to prioritise love and elopes from the monastery with Henault. This decision leads to a series of misfortunes in their lives: rejection from their families, disinheritance, financial problems and so on. Henault goes to war and is reported dead; she marries Villenoys; but one day he unexpectedly returns. This causes confusion in Isabella's mind, who worries about the consequences that this new situation of bigamy may bring about:

> She finds, by his Return, she is not only expos'd to all the Shame imaginable; to all the Upbraiding, on his part, when he shall know she is marry'd to another; but all the Fury and Rage of *Villenoys*, and the Scorn of the Town, who will look on her as an Adulteress. (Behn 1995, 249)

She feels such a strong personal and social pressure that she desperately ends up killing both husbands, eventually confessing her murders and being publicly executed. This is a story about the negative consequences of violating vows, but also, quite meaningfully, about women's difficulties to counter the constraints and pressures of society, sometimes expressed through scornful comments and laughter.[9]

I will now focus on Alexander Oldys's *The Fair Extravagant*, which is an interesting novel for its literary treatment of the fear of laughter, and has received very little critical attention so far.[10] It is reminiscent of the type of comedies written in the 1670s and early 1680s, with a witty heroine who cross-dresses in order to find a prospective husband, and a hero that belongs to a group of Tory gallants who are keen on drinking, flirting, and railing against marriage. It is a story that shows the recurrent concern about unruly women and the tensions of power in couples, and how this concern is related to expectations about masculinity in the rakish Carolean period. It is related with much irony and with reference to the politics, literature, and social life of Restoration London.

In spite of its full title, *The Fair Extravagant, or, The Humorous Bride*, the story focuses more on the hero than on the eponymous heroine. Ariadne sets up the action and controls the plot, but Polydor soon occupies centre stage and the narrative becomes a trial of his qualities, particularly of his manhood. Wealthy, seventeen-year-old Ariadne determines to find a man she could marry and for that purpose she puts on her brother's clothes, so that she can interact with men more freely. She finally chooses

9 For studies on *The History of the Nun*, see Pearson 1991 and 1993, and Goulding 2008.

10 There is no modern edition of Alexander Oldys's works, nor any book-length study about them. The only critical essays to focus on this novel are Figueroa-Dorrego 2008 and 2009. Nicholas Hudson devotes some pages to speak to Oldys, whom he considers "an important and unjustly ignored innovator in the history of English prose fiction" (2005, 577).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Polydor, a thirty-year-old gentleman belonging to a good family but, as he was the youngest son, inheriting only a small fortune. Pretending to be her own cousin, Ariadne tells him that her cousin (i.e. herself) wants to meet him the following morning in the park in order to marry him, but that he cannot see her face until the wedding. Taking into account the information he is given of her beauty, virtues, and prospective inheritance, Polydor is tempted by the offer yet cannot believe that it can be a true and serious one. That night at home he cannot sleep thinking that she may be a cheat and that his friends, "some of 'em Witty, Satyrical Rogues", will taunt him and ask:

> Is this he who was wont to help us Laugh at all those Sots that durst hazard their Carkasses with one Woman for better for worse? And is this Jolly Debauché, at last overtaken? Nay more, Jilted by a Lewd Woman, pretended Heiress? (1682, 35-6)

Polydor is afraid of being the butt of his friends' laughter. He belongs to a group of rakes who usually laugh at married men, and believes that his acceptance of a wedding with that mysterious woman will place him outside the group and make him a possible victim of their raillery. Yet the ridicule would be greater if she happened to be a cheat, because this would mean that he would be duped and – worse – by a woman. Following the theories of scholars such as Martineau (1972) and English (1994), it can be said that, when Polydor and his rakish friends laugh at married men, they express their hostility against those who deviate from their own way of understanding a masculinity, because they consider it foolish for a man to commit oneself to only one woman and to a dull family life. Yet, if Polydor's bride did not happen to be the beautiful, virtuous, wealthy lady she claims to be, then his witty friends would also taunt him for not sharing their intellectual abilities. Thus Polydor fears his friends' laughter because he is ashamed of not living up to the standards of masculinity prevailing in his peers' group (Hacker 2017, 206).

In spite of all his doubts and anxieties, Polydor resolves to take the risk, and meets the young heiress. They get married but Ariadne abandons him that very same evening, in order to test his patience and constancy for a week. He does not know it, and gets angry at believing himself cheated as he had feared. He tries to find her in her brother's house, but by then she has arranged that her cousin Dorothea should impersonate her and pretend she does not know him. For Polydor this confirms the idea that he has been fooled, and becomes deeply melancholic. He writes satirical verses against women, complains about his credulity, and expresses his fear of becoming the laughingstock of the family: "what will thy Mother, thy Brother, thy Sisters, and all thy Relations say to this, will they not scorn thee?" (81). He will be subject of town talk and become dishonoured: "I

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

am Lost, Ruin'd, and Eternally Miserable" (82). He considers that his prudence, intellect, and manliness have been belittled by Ariadne, and fears the contempt and ostracism of his relatives, friends, and the society in general. Therefore, he again suffers from the same shame-bound anxiety that is the basis of gelotophobia.

In order to finish off her tormenting trial of Polydor, Ariadne asks her suitor Marwood to accuse Polydor of the debts contracted before his marriage. As a result, Polydor is imprisoned. In jail he receives the visit of his jocular, rakish friends, who continue making fun of his situation. Harry asks him: "Why were there not Wives enow in the Town of other Mens but you must needs get one of your own!" (139), and wonders why such a rich heiress should wish to marry him. Polydor reproaches them for laughing at him instead of offering advice and help, and warns them: "It may fall to my share to laugh at you, yet e'er I die". To which Harry retorts: "Ay, if your Spouse shou'd prove a right Diamond and no Counterfeit […] you might laugh at us for laughing at you", and advises him to "ease [his] Spleen the other way" (141) – in other words, Polydor should calm down and try to cheer up. Harry's remarks seem to demonstrate that he and the other friends do not feel guilty for laughing at Polydor, as they do not really intend to disparage him harshly, but only to have fun in a convivial manner. They never mean to denigrate and exclude Polydor from the group, but his gelotophobia does not allow him to see that laughter may at times be joyful, playful, and harmless, that it is not always used to deprecate others (see Titze 2009; Proyer, Ruch 2010). Harry reminds Polydor that he may also laugh at them, particularly if Ariadne finally proves to be no fraud after all. In fact they never abandon him and, at the end, Polydor invites them to celebrate the "second" wedding: "Come […] We are all friends" (178). Thus, the novel finishes with the typical comic ending of harmony and conviviality overcoming the moments of anxiety caused by fictitious deception.

5 Conclusion

The fear of derisive laughter was a common concern for early modern commentators about laughter, humour, and comedy, as well as for a considerable amount of characters in Restoration prose fiction. This reveals the powerful social pressure that the shame-culture prevailing in England exerted on people, and that scornful laughter was often the mark or vehicle of such pressure. To a larger or lesser extent, people felt themselves hurt and humiliated when they became the butts of derisive laughter, or were afraid that this might ever happen. They were worried about their reputation and how this might affect their lives. The presence of this kind of fear is evident in the cases analysed here: in the citizen cheated by Hind

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

in *The English Gusman*, in Cornelia's father and in Squire Limberham in *The London Jilt*, in Octavio in *Love-Letters*, in Isabella in *The History of the Nun*, and in Polydor in *The Fair Extravagant*. Focusing on the latter, it is obvious that the actions of the "fair extravagant" and "humorous bride" Ariadne unsettle Polydor's life, who sees his gender identity challenged by her unconventional marriage proposal and sudden disappearance. First, he is afraid that his rakish, marriage-hating friends may mock him if he accepts her proposal, and then he fears the laughter of his relatives for being abandoned by his bride just after the wedding. Thus Polydor seems to believe that Ariadne's unorthodox behaviour threatens not only the homosocial bonds that he has with his friends, and the coherence of his commitment to libertinism, but also his masculinity in general, because her apparent deceit leads him to think that he has acted imprudently and cannot control his wife. He is afraid that his friends and relatives may scorn him for his weakness, and this may seriously affect his reputation. Therefore, Polydor shows symptoms of, at least temporary, gelotophobia as the result of Ariadne's unexpected conduct. And this is due to the interrelationship between derision and shame and also to the manner in which men's psychological stability and social reputation depended on women's behaviour at that time.

Bibliography

Addison, Joseph (1973). "*The Spectator*, No. 249 (1711)". McMillin, Scott (ed.), *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Comedy*. New York: Norton, 378-80.

Ahern. Stephen (2005). "'Glorious ruine': Romantic Excess and the Politics of Sensibility in Behn's *Love-Letters*". *Restoration*, 29(1), 29-45.

Amussen, Susan D. (1988). *An Ordered Society. Gender and Class in Early Modern England*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Aristotle (1984). *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*. Transl. by W. Rhys Roberts and Ingram Bywater. New York: Modern Library.

Ballaster, Ros (1992). *Seductive Fiction. Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ballaster, Ros (2004). "'The Story of the Heart': *Love-Letters Between and Noble-Man and his Sister*". Hughes, Derek; Todd, Janet (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 135-50. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521820197.009.

Barrow, Isaac (1678). *Several Sermons Against Evil Speaking*. London: Brabazon Aylmer.

Behn, Aphra (1993). *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*. Vol. 2 of *The Works of Aphra Behn*. Edited by Janet Todd. London: Wil-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

liam Pickering. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9781851960132.book.1.

Behn, Aphra (1995). *The History of the Nun*. Vol. 3 of *The Works of Aphra Behn*. Edited by Janet Todd. London: William Pickering, 205-58. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9781851960149.book.1.

Bergson, Henri [1900] (1980). "Laughter". Sypher, Wylie (ed.), *Comedy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 61-190.

Breitenberg, Mark (1996). *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burton, Robert (2001). *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Edited by Holbrook Jackson. New York: New York Review of Books.

Creighton, Millie (1990). "Revisiting Shame and Guilt Cultures: A Forty-Year Pilgrimage". *Ethos*, 18(3), 279-307. DOI https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.1990.18.3.02a00030.

Davies, Christie (2009). "Humor Theory and the Fear of Being Laughed at". *Humor*, 22(1-2), 49-62. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.2009.003.

Dryden, John (1997). "Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay (1668)". Womersley, David (ed.), *Augustan Critical Writing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 15-78.

English, James (1994). *Comic Transactions. Literature, Humour, and the Politics of Community in Twentieth-Century Britain*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Ferguson, Mark A.; Ford, Thomas E. (2008). "Disparagement Humor: A Theoretical and Empirical Review of Psychoanalytic, Superiority, and Social Identity Theories". *Humor*, 21(3), 283-312. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humor.2008.014.

Figueroa-Dorrego, Jorge (2008). "Alexander Oldys's Comic Displacement of Romance in *The Fair Extravagant*". Lorenzo-Modia; M. Jesús (eds), *Proceedings from the 21st AEDEAN Conference*. A Coruña: Universidade da Coruña, 433-42.

Figueroa-Dorrego, Jorge (2009). "Ariadne's Adaptation of Alexander Oldys's *The Fair Extravagant* in *She Ventures and He Wins*". *SEDERI*, 18, 177-88.

Figueroa-Dorrego, Jorge; Larkin-Galiñanes, Cristina (eds) (2009). *A Source Book of Literary and Philosophical Writings About Humour and Laughter*. Lewiston (NY): Edwin Mellen Press.

Ford, Thomas; Richardson, Kyle; Petit, Whitney (2015). "Disparagement Humor and Prejudice: Contemporary Theory and Research". *Humor*, 28(2), 171-86. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2015-0017.

Foyster, Elizabeth (1999). *Manhood in Early Modern England. Honour, Sex and Marriage*. London: Longman. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315840901.

Goulding, Susan (2008). "Aphra Behn's *Stories of Nuns*: Narrative Diversions and *Sister Books*". *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies*, 10(1), 38-55.

Hacker, Peter (2017). "Shame, Embarrassment, and Guilt". *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 41, 202-24. DOI https://doi.org/10.1111/misp.12073.

Heyd, David (1982). “The Place of Laughter in Hobbes’s Theory of Emotion”. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 43(2), 285-95. DOI https://doi.org/10.2307/2709204.

Hobbes, Thomas (1973). *Leviathan*. London: Dent.

Hobbes, Thomas (1994). *Human Nature and De Corpore Politico*. Edited by J.C.A. Gaskin. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hudson, Nicholas (2005). “Social Rank, ‘The Rise of the Novel’, and Whig Histories of Eighteenth-Century Fiction”. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 17(4), 563-98. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/ecf.2005.0009.

Martineau, William (1972). “A Model of the Social Functions of Humor”. Goldstein, Jeffrey; McGhee, Paul (eds), *The Psychology of Humor*. New York: Academic Press, 101-25. DOI https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-288950-9.50011-0.

Morreall, John (1983). *Taking Laughter Seriously*. Albany (NY): State University of New York Press.

Oldys, Alexander (1682). *The Fair Extravagant, or, The Humorous Bride. An English Novel*. London: Charles Blount.

Pearson, Jacqueline (1991). “Gender and Narrative in the Fiction of Aphra Behn”. *The Review of English Studies*, 42(165), 40-56, and 42(166), 170-90. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/res/xlii.165.40 and https://doi.org/10.1093/res/xlii.166.179.

Pearson, Jacqueline (1993). “The History of *The History of the Nun*”. Hutner, Heidi (ed.), *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 234-52.

Platt, Tracey; Ruch, Willibald (2009). “The Emotions of Gelotophobes: Shameful, Fearful, and Joyless?”. *Humor*, 22(1-2), 91-110. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.2009.005.

Pollak, Ellen (1993). “Beyond Incest: Gender and the Politics of Transgression in Aphra Behn’s Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister”. Hutner, Heidi (ed.), *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 151-86.

Proyer, René; Ruch, Willibald (2010). “Dispositions Towards Ridicule and Being Laughed at: Current Research on Gelotophobia, Gelotophilia, and Katagelasticism”. *Psychological Test and Assessment Modeling*, 52(1), 49-59.

Ruch, Willibald (2009). “Fearing Humor? Gelotophobia: The Fear of Being Laughed at. Introduction and Overview”. *Humor*, 22(1-2), 1-25. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.2009.001.

Ruch, Willibald; Proyer, René (2008). “The Fear of Being Laughed at: Individual and Group Differences in Gelotophobia”. *Humor*, 21(1), 47-67. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humor.2008.002.

Ruch, Willibald; Proyer, René (2009). “Who Fears Being Laughed at? The Location of Gelotophobia in the Eysenckian PEN-Model of Personality”.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Personality and Individual Differences, 46, 627-30. DOI https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2009.01.004.

Ruch, Willibald; Hofmann, Jenifer; Platt, Tracey; Royer, René (2014). "The State-of-the Art in Gelotophobia Research: A Review and Some Theoretical Extensions". *Humor*, 27(1), 23-45. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2013-0046.

Salzman, Paul (1985). *English Prose Fiction, 1558-1700. A Critical History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Sanders, Barry (1995). *Sudden Glory. Laughter as Subversive History*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Shadwell, Thomas (1997). "Preface to *The Humorists* (1671)". Womersley, David (ed.), *Augustan Critical Writing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 85-93.

Sidney, Philip (1973). *An Apology for Poetry*. Edited by Geoffrey Shepherd. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Steele, Richard (1973). "Epilogue to *The Lying Lover* (1704)". McMillin, Scott (ed.), *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Comedy*. New York: Norton, 367-68.

The London Jilt 2007 = *The London Jilt* (2007). Edited by Charles Hinnant. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Thomas, Keith (1977). "The place of laughter in Tudor and Stuart England". *Times Literary Magazine*, 21, 77-81.

Titze, Michael (2009). "Gelotophobia: The Fear of Being Laughed at". *Humor*, 22(1-2), 27-48. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.2009.002.

Todd, Janet (1996). "Who is Silvia? What is She? Feminine Identity in Apha Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*". Todd, Janet (ed.), *Aphra Behn Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 199-217.

Wiltenburg, Joy (2016). "Soundings of Laughter in Early Modern England: Women, Men, and Everyday Uses of Humor". *Early Modern Women*, 10(2), 22-41. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/emw.2016.0002.

Zillman, Dolf; Cantor, Joanne (1976). "A Disposition Theory of Humour and Mirth". Chapman, Antony; Foot, Hugh (eds), *Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Application*. London: John Wiley & Sons, 93-115.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Frances Greville's *A Prayer for Indifference*
The Limits of Sentiment

Karin Kukkonen
(Universitetet i Oslo, Kongeriket Norge)

Abstract The present article considers Frances Greville's poem *A Prayer for Indifference* as the centre of a debate around the nature of the emotions and their social and cultural roles in the eighteenth century. Greville questions the models of the philosophers of sensibility, in particular Francis Hutcheson's, and, drawing on Shakespeare's newly prominent status, puts forward literature as an alternative.

Keywords Frances Greville. Moral Sense. Stoicism. Sentiment. Shakespeare.

1 Introduction

The British writer Frances Burney describes her godmother Frances Greville in a letter as "a penetrant, puissant and sarcastic fairy queen" (1823, 103).[1] Greville does not appear to have fitted the ideal image of an eighteenth-century lady in touch with the trends of sentiment and sensibility. She rather brings to mind the depiction of Mrs Selwyn in *Evelina*, Burney's first novel, appearing in the same year as her letter about Greville. Mrs Selwyn does not hide her quick wits and lets her barbed tongue comment freely, embarrassing young Evelina more than once in the course of the novel's narrative. The literary reputation that Greville attained in her own day is due to a poem written by herself (which corresponds to Burney's characterisation in many ways).

A Prayer for Indifference was first published in the *Edinburgh Chronicle* (14-17 April, 1759) and frequently included in collections and miscellanies throughout the century. William Cowper responded with "Addressed to Miss ---, on Reading the Prayer for Indifference" (1762; first published in

The article first appeared in German in the journal Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert (Göttingen; Wallstein). It has been translated from the German by the Author.

1 See also Rizzo 2015. In her study *Companions without Vows*, Rizzo draws the comparison between Frances Greville and Mrs Selwyn in more detail (1994, 241).

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/008
Submitted: 2018-09-24 | Accepted: 2018-12-01

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

1814) while Hannah More criticised Greville with her poem "Sensibility: An Epistle to the Honourable Mrs Bocaswen" (1781), as did Helen Maria Williams in "To Sensibility" (1786). Throughout the eighteenth century, Greville's *Prayer for Indifference* remained one of the clearest rejections of the cult of sensibility, and the text with which the champions of sentiment felt the need to engage.[2] While it is conventionally women who are seen as particular attuned to feelings, also men can excel in the eighteenth-century understanding of 'sentiment' and 'sensibility' (one need only think of *Tristram Shandy*, *David Simple* and *The Man of Feeling*). This particular conceptualisation of feeling, however, links to reason and the social order, and thereby, ensures that male characters and authors are not subsumed under a female category (see Spacks 2001, 257 ff.). Greville's "A Prayer for Indifference" shows the limits of sentiment as the speaker of the poem steps out of role prescribed for women and refuses to accept the authority of her feelings any longer. She calls on Shakespeare's Oberon and develops an alternative female model of feelings to the contemporary constellation of sentiment, virtue and public weal.

2 Faeries, Feelings and Indifference

> Oh! haste to shed the sovereign balm,
> My shattered nerves new-string;
> And for my guest, serenely calm,
> The Nymph Indifference bring. (Greville 1989, ll. 33-6)

The speaker of Greville's poem calls upon the faerie king Oberon and begs him for a magic potion. Yet while the potion in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1600) gives Puck the opportunity to play fast and loose with the feelings of Titania and the four young Athenians, leading to all kinds of confusions and difficulties, in Greville's poem, the gift from the faerie signifies the release from throes of passion and feeling.

> I ask no kind return in love,
> No tempting charm to please;
> Far from the heart such gifts remove
> That sighs for peace and ease. (ll. 17-20)

Furthermore, Greville comments on the 'heart', the main organ of sensibility, as follows:

2 A similarly critical treatment is presented by Ann Yearley in "To Indifference" (1787). More complete lists of poems responding to Greville's *Prayer for Indifference* can be found in Grundy 1988, 15-16, and Rizzo 1994, 371 fn. 9).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Nor ease nor peace that heart can know
  That, like the needle true,
Turns at any touch of joy or woe,
  But turning, trembles, too. (ll. 21-4)

Like the needle of a compass, the heart indicates feelings "of joy or woe", but, because the sentimental heart gives access to these feelings, it also leads to unrest. The sentimental heart in Greville's *Prayer for Indifference* constantly moves between 'joy' and 'woe', 'bliss' and 'agony', 'pleasure' and 'pain'. In the stanzas treating the matter of the heart, Greville jumps between positive and negative feelings with her choice of words, negations arranged in chiastic fashion and fully-fledged figures of chiasms. The heart of Greville's speaker does not get to rest and threatens to explode the eighteenth-century culture of sentiment (according to which, as we shall see in a moment, feelings can be cultivated and put to social use). This does not mean that Greville veers to excess. Rather, she presents an ideal vision of an *un*feeling subject in the second half of the poem:

The tears, which pity taught to flow,
  My eyes shall then disown;
The heart, that throbbed at others' woe,
  Shall then scarce feel its own. (ll. 41-4)

In the moral philosophy of the eighteenth century, 'pity' and 'sympathy' play a central role as the expression of social connections and links. The emotions as 'passions', for example in Thomas Hobbes or in Bernard Mandeville, drive the subject to action without thought and often lead to the reckless pursuit of individual benefits, and are distinctly different from the emotions as 'sentiments' as conceptualised later in the eighteenth century. For the Earl of Shaftesbury, emotions as sentiments are the expression of the larger positive nature of man. For Francis Hutcheson, they are part of the 'moral sense', which works as a kind of social perception and then turns into the basis of all social and economic interaction in Adam Smith.[3]

Greville's vision of 'Indifference' certainly does not want to return to the 'passions', but it criticises the notion of 'sensibility', exactly because this philosophy also appears to surrender the subject to painful experiences just as much as the previous mechanistic view. Indeed, she distances herself so far from the sentimental signifiers in the final verse of the stanza above that she does not even mention 'heart' and 'woe', but rather retreats to neutral references back to the beginning of the stanza with

3 See Mullan 1988 and Barker-Benfield 1992 for larger overviews on 'sentiment' and its philosophical and cultural implications.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

"its own". Greville is quite aware that her attack on the moral philosophy of sentiment is not likely to meet with great approval, and she ends the poem with the words "Half-pleased, contented I will be | Contented, half to please" (ll. 63-4).

3 Sentiments, Stoicism and Moral Philosophy

What exactly is this 'Indifference' that the poem's speaker hopes for? The definitions in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* range from 'neutrality' and 'impartiality' (referenced through the disinterested approach to sensory perceptions recommended by John Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*) all the way to 'negligence'. 'Indifference' seems to have a relatively neutral meaning in everyday usage. In the context of moral philosophy, however, it refers to a rather negative quality. The response poems to Greville demonstrate this clearly.

After "Miss ---", Cowper's addressee, has read Greville's poem, the speaker of Cowper's poem invites her to speak the counter-prayer together with him. This gesture shows the social and religious relevance of the rejection of 'indifference':

> 'Tis woven in the world's great plan,
> And fixed by Heav'n's decree,
> That all the true delights of man
> Should spring from *Sympathy*. (Cowper 1980, ll. 45-8)

Rejecting feelings would mean rejecting the plan of creation that underlies the world view of the eighteenth century (most prominently articulated in Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*). If we could get rid of feelings, Cowper argues, we would not only avoid negative feelings but also destroy the cohesion of marriage and society and foil the inspiration that underlies the arts.

Hannah More's "Sensibility" is even more outspoken: if Greville's "Prayer" should be heard, she would not be able to write a poem such as this, because it builds on feelings (and thereby stages a paradox) (see also McGann 1996, 51). After all, as also Helen Maria Williams underlines in her poem "To Sensibility", Greville would relinquish also the positive aspects of sensibility if she were to say goodbye to feelings forever.

> That envied ease thy heart would prove
> Were sure too dearly bought
> With friendship, sympathy, and love
> And every finer thought. (Williams 1786, ll. 81-4)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Is there no successful road to indifference in the eighteenth-century world of thought? Maybe we can find this in the moral philosophy of Stoicism, which was rather popular in the mid-eighteenth century? The Stoic finds peace and tranquillity, as soon as she succeeds in taking a step back from the tempest of the emotions and in regarding said emotions as a noisy coulisse of opinions lodged between the world as it is and the world as we perceive it. In the dedicatory poem to Elizabeth Carter's translation of Epictetus, we read:

> Come Epictetus! Arm my Breast […]
> Oh teach my trembling Heart
> To scorn Affliction's Dart
> Teach me to mock the Tyrant Pain! ("An Irregular Ode" 1758, ll. 5-7)

The promise of Stoic serenity, however, that comes from surmounting emotions, is either ridiculed in the eighteenth century (see, for instance, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*) or presented as unattainable (as with the Stoic philosopher in Johnson's *Rasselas*) (see also Norton 2012, 25-45). We find similar lines of argument in the response poems to Greville's *Prayer for Indifference*. In Lady Carlile's "The Fairy's Answer" (1781), for example, Oberon reports his frenetic, comical search for a "[g]rain of cold indifference", which is hopeless since such as substance would break "[t]hose laws which Fate has made" (ll. 46, 57).

The dedicatory poem to Carter's translation, cited above, is also at pains to underline that Epictetus and Stoic philosophy do not liberate the individual from the demands of Christian charity and sympathy. It asks Carter to turn her translation from ancient philosophy to the concerns of modern Christian teachings. There is no room for a Stoic 'indifference' that would break the bonds of moral feelings. When read against the main part of the poem, which revolves around a clearly Christian world of feeling and sentiment, the request that Epictetus should 'arm' the poem's speaker against the tempests of emotions turns almost mock-heroic. Carter then also states in her introduction, which offers an overview of Stoic philosophy for her eighteenth-century readers, that "[t]he absolute Indifference of all Externals, and the Position, That Things independent on Choice are nothing to us, the grand Point on which their Arguments turned, every one, who feels, knows to be false" (1758, xviii).

Eighteenth-century moral philosophy comes to a similar verdict. Shaftesbury writes: "Let indolence, indifference or insensibility be studies as an art, or cultivated with the utmost care, the passions thus restrained will force their prison" (1999, 214). Hutcheon comments on the "Vanity of some of the lower rate of Philosophers of the *Stoick Sect*". He observes, "That this *affectionate Temper* is true Virtue, and not that *undisturbed Selfishness*, were it attainable, every one would readily own who saw them both in Practice"

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

(Hutcheson 2002, 83; italics in the original). The Stoic model of indifference, of equanimity (*apatheia*), which is not perturbed by any emotion, appears to be a pipe ream. On the contrary, the emotions we cannot escape are reconceptualised as "affectionate Temper" and turned into the guiding lights of virtue. Hutcheson's "moral sense", for example, depends on the "sensations" we feel in response to virtue and vice and it leads us to do the right thing. At the same time, the "moral sense" helps us towards happiness, because it makes us experience pleasure in the good qualities of others (78).[4]

Greville's poem questions these seemingly secure conclusions. Let us begin with the interesting parallel between Carter and Hutcheson when it comes to the basis of Stoic 'indifference': everyone knows from their own experience, either through their own feelings (as with Carter) or through their own reflections (as with Hutcheson) that the Stoic attempt to separate feelings and thoughts is not feasible. The reference back to one's own experience, through one's 'moral sense', then turns to the central moral instance in Hutcheson. Greville, however, asks Oberon to liberate her from exactly this 'sense'. "Take then this treacherous sense of mine, | Which dooms me still to smart" (ll. 29-30). Greville's speaker is happy to relinquish her painful emotions. "Sense" can be read as 'sensibility' (meaning the perception of feelings) in these verses, but it certainly also links to the 'moral sense' (meaning feeling as perception and moral discernment). She calls it "treacherous". First and foremost, it might mean that "sense" promises a happiness that it cannot deliver. But go a step further and the "treacherous sense" will not even be able to point you the right way in the social landscape. The compass needle of the sentimental heart no longer offers a reliable orientation, neither when it comes to interpersonal relationships, nor when it comes to transcendental matters. And the sentimental edifice of thought is about to collapse unto itself.

Greville is not the only eighteenth-century female author who criticises the culture of sentiment. Charlotte Lennox's poem "On Reading Hutcheson on the Passion"[5] states that Hutcheson's model is of no help to those already caught in the stream of emotions: "Why was thy soft philosophy addrest | All to the vacant ear, and quiet breast" (1760, 5-6). When examining Hutcheson's chapter "[h]ow far our several Affections and Passions are under our Power", it becomes indeed apparent that the philosopher does not offer any practical means to master one's feelings. This lies in the nature of his model. The 'moral sense' is given to each individual human being and it shows in quasi-automatic fashion which virtue one should

4 Hutcheson refers to Marcus Aurelius for this point; certainly a thinker who does not belong to the "lower rate of Philosophers of the Stoick Sect".

5 Lennox's poem exists in two different versions, published in her collection *Poems on Several Occasions* (1747) and in her journal *The Lady's Museum* (1760).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

admire and which vice one should despise. Hutcheson writes: "But 'tis plain, we have not in our power the modelling of our *Senses or Desires*, to form them for a private Interest: They are fixed for us by the AUTHOR of our Nature" (2002, 82). Lennox draws from such remarks the conclusion that Hutcheson's system only works if you are already feeling rather little.[6] As she puts it, it is a philosophy for the "serenely stupid" (l. 13). Greville's criticism is less explicit. She shows that spontaneous emotions are often painful and that the moral dimension only works to intensify such pain. Neither Greville nor Lennox mention the term "virtue", which is central for Hutcheson, the Stoics and also Cowper (especially when it comes to the moral education of his female addressee in the poem). As female authors, Greville and Lennox know better than to criticise the moral superstructure and choose to target their criticism at the emotional model instead.

4 The Disenchantment of Greville

We have seen how Greville reacts to the culture of sentiment of her days in a fashion that we could call, in line with Burney's characterisation of her godmother, "penetrant, puissant and [in certain moments] sarcastic". Burney also addresses her as a "fairy queen" (1823, 103) and, indeed, Greville chooses to embed her poem not into the Christian world order but into Shakespeare's fairy realm from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This strategy, which can also be traced as a topos of liberation in the work of other female authors of the period (see Doody 2000, 230-3), lends the poem a playful note and develops an alternative role for literature in the debate around feelings.

The speaker introduces Oberon as follows:

Sweet airy being, wanton sprite,
  That liv'st in woods unseen,
And oft by Cynthia's silver light
  Trips't gaily o'er the green. (ll. 5-8)

After the speaker has presented her plea and imagined in some detail the effect of the healing potion, she describes her good wishes for Oberon and thereby gives further shape to the fairy world:

And so may never-fading bliss
  Thy flowery paths attend!

6 While Lennox still hopes in the version from 1747 that she will master her passions and find repose, the version from 1760 switches into a different key and gives up on Hutcheson and the promise of his model.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

To some new region of delight,
Unknown to mortal tread. (ll. 51-6)

Through Oberon Greville conjures a fairy realm that emerges as dainty, skirts the mundane and embodies happiness. Oberon's paths are "unknown to mortal tread" and he lives in "woods unseen". This world is not accessible to human beings (and perhaps not even perceptible to them). "Glow-worms" and "acorn goblets" describe the measure of his world. While Oberon dances in the direction of new delights and never-ending felicity, the poem's speaker hopes for a less dynamic "sweet repose" and "sober ease" which will calm the compass needle of her heart. A moral human being cannot promenade on the paths of Oberon, and she cannot share either really or metaphorically his "acorn goblet" which is filled "with heaven's ambrosial dew, / From sweetest, freshest flowers distilled" (ll. 57-9). What remains for the human being is, at best, indifference.

Greville's poem seems to take up a phenomenon which Max Weber calls the "disenchantment of the world" (1988, 594). Weber discusses how the trust in reason, the development of rational science and philosophy and, eventually, the bureaucratic organisation of society turn the world into a prosaic, grim place. The study of the history of emotions also discusses this in terms of the self-disciplining through discourses around manners and politeness (see Elias 1994; Reddy 2001; Goring 2004). Of course, Weber is mainly addressing developments in the nineteenth century, but the notion of the 'disenchantment of the world' is already present in Friedrich Schiller's poem "The Gods of Greece" ("Die Götter Griechenlands" [1788] 1960). Schiller, just as Greville two decades earlier, links joy with fantasy and speaks of "beautiful creatures from fairy realms" ("schöne Wesen aus dem Fabelland", l. 4). In Schiller's poem, the heavens are empty, God appears distant and humans are merely "the first and most noble of the worms" ("der Würmer Erster, Edelster", l.190). Nature is dead, as it is now governed by science, and this turns also the speaker of Schiller's poem (who expresses himself on the part of humanity as a whole) into an unfeeling creature. In the eighteenth-century culture of feeling and sensibility, one might find scientific terms and measurements, such as the compass mentioned by Greville, but these serve to illustrate the movements of feelings not to stifle them. The world according to Shaftesbury or Cowper draws on these measurements to indicate to everyone how well it has been designed, while Greville and Schiller present an altogether different perspective.

Both Greville and Schiller use the notion of 'faerie' to show the boundaries of the culture of sentiment. Greville does not (yet) draw the boundaries between science and the arts as firmly as Schiller does. She rather plays with possible fictionalisations of older scientific models, such as the 'animal spirits', which come to be related to the fairy creatures. According to

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the Renaissance conception, the ‘animal spirits’ are produced in the brain and their movements are closely linked to the ‘passions’ (see Arikha 2007). In the eighteenth century, Swift describes them satirically as “a crowd of little animals, but with teeth and claws extremely sharp”, in “A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operations of the Spirit” (2008, 134). Like the individual bodies in Hobbes’s Leviathan, they course through the nervous pathways and, depending on the shape of their bites, bring forth poetry, rhetoric and political writings (see also Sutton 1998, 138). The fairies in Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* can indeed be read as ‘animal spirits’ that constantly provoke new feelings and love pains. Greville, I would argue, consciously reimagines Oberon in this light. On the one hand, she gives new life to the old notion that feelings emerge from the capricious ‘animal spirits’ and underscores that they by no means represent a reliable ‘moral sense’. At the same time she takes Oberon into the service of her own cause and expects release from the tyranny of sentiment from him. Greville’s fictionalisation of the animal spirits also reminds her contemporaries of the fact that poets are by no means tied to Hutcheson’s model (even though the response poems, as we have seen, seem to assume so). Even if a visit from Oberon is unlikely and even if his potion has only imaginary powers (as the light touch of “haply some herb or tree” indicates; l. 14), the fairy realms offer an alternative model for thinking through the dominant culture of ‘sentiment’. The rhythm of the poem, sashaying and almost swaggering, relates itself to Shakespeare’s blank verse and carries readers from the strictures of sentiment into the imaginary world of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

5 Conclusion

The link to Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* gives Greville the necessary cultural legitimisation to attack the culture of sentiment and, at the same time, allows her to develop an alternative model drawing on a literary tradition that is in the process of getting established and enhanced in those very decades. Shakespeare’s plays more generally question the reliability of feelings. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in particular, presents two characters, Demetrius and Lysander, who show with the greatest sincerity feelings that (as the audience well knows) have been manipulated by the fairies. These feelings do not work as a moral compass; rather, they are the reason why Titania, Lysander and Demetrius cannot distinguish between dream and reality. Greville develops her criticism with a comparatively light touch through the fairy theme in her poem, but the numerous response poems show that she hit a nerve with her *Prayer for Indifference*.

William Reddy writes about the (French) theory of emotions in the eighteenth century: “sentimentalism’s view of human nature was wrong in inter-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

esting ways" (2001, 146). No matter how much Hutcheson and Carter, as representatives of 'sentiments' and 'sensibility' appeal to the experience of their readers, doubts always remain as to whether their theory is generalisable to the extent they believe. These doubts emerge from that fact that the cultural model of the emotions only captures part of the larger cognitive phenomenon. Even if 'sensibility' was right at the centre of literary interest in the eighteenth century, dissenting voices found their place. Sarah Fielding works out the ironic discrepancies between feeling 'sentiment' and translating it into actually beneficial actions (see Gadeken 2002), and fainting and hysteria might also be interpreted as escape routes from the tyranny of sentiment rather than as confirmations of female sensibility (see Csengei 2012). With Shakespeare's Oberon, Greville brings literature itself as a player into this debate, both as a challenge to the familiar model of thinking about 'sentiment' and as a temporary liberation from the corset of 'moral sense'.

Bibliography

Anon. (1758). "An Irregular Ode". *All the Works of Epictetus*. Translated by Elizabeth Carter. London. n.p.

D'Arblay, Madame [= Frances Burney] (1832). *Memoires of Dr Burney, Arranged from His Own Manuscripts, from Family Papers and from Personal Recollections*, vol. 2. London: Edward Moxon.

Arikha, Noga (2007). *Passions and Tempers: A History of Humours*. Toronto: Harper Perennial.

Barker-Benfield, Graham (1992). *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carlisle, Lady (1781). "The Fairy's Answer". *The Lady's Poetical Magazine*, vol. 1. London: Printed for Harrison & co., 186-8.

Carter, Elizabeth (transl.) (1758). "Introduction". *All the Works of Epictetus*. London: Printed by S. Richardson, i-xxiv.

Cowper, William (1980). "Addressed to Miss--- On Reading the *Prayer for Indifference*". Baird, John D.; Ryskamp, Charles (eds), *1748-1782*. Vol. 1 of *The Poems of William Cowper*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 74-7. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198118756.book.1`.

Csengei, Idilko (2012). *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. Basingstoke: Routledge. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230359178`.

Doody, Margaret Anne (2000). "Women Poets of the Eighteenth Century". Jones, Vivien (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 217-37.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Elias, Norbert (1994). *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners, State Formation and Civilisation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935383.013.139.

Gadeken, Sara (2002). "Sarah Fielding and the Salic Law of Wit". *Studies in English Literature*, 42(3), 541-57. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/sel.2002.0026.

Goring, Paul (2004). *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511484261.

Greville, Frances (1989). "A Prayer for Indifference". Lonsdale, Roger (ed.), *Eighteenth-Century Women Poets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 192-4.

Grundy, Isobel (1988). "Indifference and Attachment: An Eighteenth-Century Poetic Debate". *Factotum*, 26, 15-16.

Johnson, Samuel (2015). "Indifference". *A Dictionary of the English Language*. URL https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/ (2019-02-26).

Hutcheson, Francis (2002). *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense*. Edited by Aaron Garrett. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.

Lennox, Charlotte (1747). "On Reading Hutcheson on the Passions". *Poems on Several Occasions. Written by a Young Lady*. London: Printed for Harrison & co., 37-8.

Lennox, Charlotte (1760-61) "On Reading Hutcheson on the Passions". *The Lady's Museum*, vol. 2. London: J. Newbery, 667.

McGann, Jerome (1996). *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mullan, John (1988). *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198122524.001.0001.

Norton, Brian Michael (2012). *Fiction and the Philosophy of Happiness: Ethical Inquiries in the Age of Enlightenment*. Lanham: Massachusetts University Press.

Reddy, William (2001). *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511512001.

Rizzo, Betty (1994). *Companions Without Vows: Relationships Among Eighteenth-Century British Women*. Athens (GA): University of Georgia Press.

Rizzo, Betty (2015). "Greville [née Macartney], Frances". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. URL https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/66076 (2019-02-22).

Schiller, Friedrich (1960). "Die Götter Griechenlands". Fricke, Gerhard; Göpfert, Herbert G. (Hrsgg.), *Gedichte und Dramen I*. Bd. 1 von *Sämtliche Werke*. München: dtv Verlag, 162-9.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper (1999). *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times*. Edited by Lawrence H. Klein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511803284.005.

Spacks, Patricia Meyer (2001). "The Poetry of Sensibility". Sitter, John (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 249-69. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521650909.012.

Smith, Adam (2010). *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Edited by Ryan Patrick Henley. London: Penguin.

Sutton, John (1998). "Controlling the Passions: Passion, Memory and the Moral Physiology of Self in Seventeenth-Century Neurophilosophy". Graukoger, Stephen (ed.), *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*. London: Routledge, 115-45. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203448519.

Swift, Jonathan (2008). "A Discourse Concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit". *A Tale of a Tub and Other Works*. Edited by Angus Ross and David Woolley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 126-41.

Weber, Max (1988). "Wissenschaft als Beruf". Winckelmann, Johannes (Hrsg.), *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Tübingen: Mohr, 582-613.

Williams, Helen Maria (1786). "To Sensibility". *Poems*, vol. 1. London: T. Cadell, 21-8.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Isaac Watts's Hymnody as a Guide for the Passions

Daniel Johnson
(University of Leicester, UK)

Abstract Isaac Watts (1674-1748) argued that the passions, understood synonymously with the affections, were an essential component of the Christian experience. Watts designed a system of hymnody which allowed the worshipper to excite, cultivate, and express their passions. This paper traces the history of the passions and affections in those who were to influence Watts' thought, before considering the ways Watts' hymns allowed the passions to be experienced and articulated.

Keywords Isaac Watts. Hymns. Passions. Affections. Singing. Worship. Dissent. Calvinism.

1 Introduction[1]

Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the dissenting minster, hymnwriter, educator, and philosopher, is a pivotal figure, representing the transition and migration from seventeenth-century Calvinism to eighteenth-century Evangelicalism. He is, in the words of Graham Beynon, an "Enlightenment Puritan" (2016, 192), situated between "Puritanism and Reason, and between Reason and Revelation" (Watson 1999, 136). He inherited the attitudes and priorities of the Puritans, modifying and communicating them for changing society (Rivers 1991, 168). Rather than reject either the Reformed faith, or the ideas emerging in the early enlightenment, Watts attempted to bring the two together into a balance of rational and affectionate religion (see Beynon 2016). The subtitle to Dewey D. Wallace, Jr.'s *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714*, describes a religion defined by three characteristics: variety, persistence, and transformation. A century would pass between the writing of the *King James Bible* and the publication of Watts' *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, and in that time the Reformed faith, which Watts was to both inherit and modify, was strengthened by the depth and breadth of work undertaken by Owen, Goodwin, Baxter, Bunyan, and others. Watts,

1 All original spellings, grammar, and punctuation have been retained throughout this article.

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/009
Submitted: 2018-10-30 | Accepted: 2018-11-26

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

along with others, most notably Phillip Doddridge, would contribute to the evolution of the Reformed faith, providing a new rationale with fresh modes of expression appropriate for the developments in eighteenth-century thinking. Wallace writes that seventeenth-century Calvinism, in its various facets and expressions, responded to the Enlightenment that was beginning to dawn on the intellectual and religious horizon by making various theological adjustments and spiritual transformations, in order to "remain faithful to the celebration of the mystery of grace" (2011, 246).

Watts was born to nonconformist parents,[2] and attended Thomas Rowe's Academy from 1690 to 1693 (Wykes 1996, 118-21). Here, Watts became familiar with the Patristics, the Reformers, the Puritans, and Enlightenment thinkers.[3] He speaks warmly of Calvin's *Institutes*, describing them as "a most excellent, Scripturall, argumentative, and elegant System of Divinity" (Wilkins 1693, opp. 112). But Watts's Calvinism was of the moderate variety; he clung to the core of Calvinism, while explaining away the harsher extremities of the system (Davis 1948, 108-9). This article will show the place of the passions in Watts's work, and the way he adapted seventeenth-century thinking into a new mode of expression through hymns of affectionate piety and evangelical theology.

2 Passions and Affections

The most common terms to describe the emotional experiences of faith throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were 'affections' and 'passions' (Frazer 2010, 17). Joy (2013a, 72) and Frazer (2010, 17) have all shown that 'affections' was a term predominantly reserved for those emotions which ought to be encouraged and cultivated, while 'passions' referred to those emotions which were to be tamed and subdued; elsewhere Louise Joy writes of the "unruly passions with their calmer, less spontaneous cousins, the affections" (2013a, 72). The experience of, and careful reflection upon, the passions and affections has long been an established part of the Protestant experience, and it was within this context and heritage that Isaac Watts would operate;[4] Thomas Dixon notes

2 During his childhood, Watts's father was imprisoned on account of his nonconformity (Davis 1948, 4-6).

3 Watts's own study notes from the Academy are preserved in his personally annotated copy of Bishop Wilkin's *Ecclesiastes* (1693), held in Dr. Williams' Library (564.D.6), which demonstrate his familiarity with Origen, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Perkins, Owen, Baxter, Goodwin, Locke, and others. My thanks to the staff at the Dr. Williams' Library for accommodating my research trips.

4 This theme is explored in Ted Campbell's chapter, "Affective Piety in Seventeenth-Century British Calvinism" (1991, 42-69).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

that to speak of the “passions and affections of the soul” was to speak in distinctly Christian categories (2003, 66). The passions and affections have their etymological roots in Latin; this distinction can be traced back to Augustine, who was subsequently a major influence on Thomas Aquinas. *Affectus* denotes the love of God, and love for one’s neighbour, whereas as *Patior* means ‘to suffer’, most famously associated with the passions, or sufferings, of Christ in his crucifixion.[5]

While these were the dominant uses of the terms, some authors used them in a more synonymous manner; for example, Edwards Reynolds uses the term ‘passion’ interchangeably with ‘affection’ (1640, 45). Kirk Essary has argued that this ambiguity had its origins in the sixteenth century, where authors such as Calvin and Erasmus rejected an overtly rigid division between the meanings of ‘affection’ and ‘passion’ (2017). Joy draws particular attention to William Fenner’s *Treatise of the Affections* (1650) as being a significant text that notably neglects discussion of the passions. This subtle but conspicuous distinction, she argues, signifies a return to Aquinas’s categories that sought to distinguish between affections as the intentional, godly desires of the soul, and the passions as the potentially harmful, sinful, negative and subjective responses of the body (2013b). The purpose of Fenner’s *Treatise* is the ordering of the emotions, which comes by establishing a distinction between the affections and the passions.

While the prevailing view is that the eighteenth century marks the dawn of the so-called ‘Age of Reason’, with its growing emphasis on reason and rationalism, this view is increasingly contested; Dixon writes forcefully that,

> the so-called ‘Age of Reason’ was also an age of ostentatious weeping, violent passions, religious revivals, and the persistence of feelings and beliefs of a kind which, according to the cartoon version of intellectual history, were jettisoned in the 1660s. (2015, 72)

During this period, the tendency to have affection and passion converge into a single field of enquiry continued. Francis Bragge writes that passions are the tendency of our souls towards both good and evil (Bragge 1708, 1) and Samuel Clarke refers to both affections and passions positively and negatively. The affections, in Christian thought, were seen in the light of the nature and revelation of God; writers such as Francis Hutcheson and Joseph Butler corroborate this view, that “the normative authority of our moral sentiments ultimately derives from the fact that they were built into our nature by God for the achievement of his intended ends” (Frazer 2010,

5 ‘Passio’ appears in the *Vulgate*, in Acts 1:3 and 1 Peter 5:1, referring to the crucifixion sufferings of Christ.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

16). Dixon has observed that the most significant contributors to this field were all members of the clergy (1999, 301); though the texts dealt with matters of theology, morality, and philosophy, they did so from a practical, rather than theoretical perspective, continuing the tradition established by the Puritans. Alan Brinton, studying references to passion in early eighteenth-century sermon literature, observes that the sermons have a broadly ethical agenda, focused on subduing the more negative passions and bringing them under the governance of reason (1992, 52). However, a distinction between the affections and the passions in Christian thought continued in some quarters throughout the eighteenth century, notably in Francis Hutcheson's *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*[6] and Jonathan Edwards' *Treatise on Religious Affections*. Dixon has demonstrated a consistency between Augustine's and Edwards' understandings of the affections (1999, 302), and Edwards describes them as the "more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul" (2009, 96). On the distinction between affections and passions, Hutcheson writes that "when more violent *confused* Sensations arise with the *Affection* […] we call the whole by the Name of *Passion*" (1728, 60; italics in the original), while Edwards writes:

> The *affections* and the *passions* are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet, in the more common use of the speech, there is in some respect a difference; and affection is a word, that in its ordinary signification, seems to be something more extensive than passion; being used for all vigorous lively actings of the will or inclination; but passion for those that are more sudden, and whose effects on the animals spirits are more violent, and the mind more overpowered, and less in its own command. (2009, 98; italics in the original)

3 Passions and Affections in Watts's Thought

Isaac Watts wrote two connected treaties on the passions, both in 1729, *The Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion* and *Discourses of the Love of God*.[7] Watts's view of the passions corresponds to that of Bragge and Clarke; they are, in Watts's writings, synonymous with the affections. "*Passions* in this Discourse signify the same with *Natural Affections*", and subsequently, "in this Discourse we take *Passion* and *Affection* to mean the

6 For a more detailed analysis of Hutcheson's thought regarding the affections and passions see Darwall 1997.

7 Having stating that they are two books, I take the same view as Davis and Joy, who see the two books as one project (Davis 1948, 223; Joy 2013b).

same thing" (1729, 2; italics in the original).[8] Watts's synonymous use of 'passion' and 'affection' can also be seen in his hymns; he speaks of "angry passions" (1707, 7) and writes: "Our Flesh and Sense, must be deny'd | Passion and Envy, Lust and Pride" (1709, 105). In contrast to this, he draws from the Song of Solomon when he describes his devotion to Christ with the words: "I am my Love's, and he is mine | our Hearts, our Hopes, our Passion joyn" (1707, 68). Watts saw the passions operating in partnership with reason, and resisted the two extremes of one without the other (Dixon 2003, 72-6); he warns of the inadequacies of reason without the fires of passion to bring piety to life, and similarly he condemns those who have neglected reason, leaving themselves exposed to "all the wild Temptations of Fancy and Enthusiasm" (Watts 1729, iv-v).[9] He subsequently details this relationship, stating that while passion must rely on reason to determine if an object is good, the passions then vigorously pursue it (48). There is much consistency between Watts and Edwards regarding the source and purpose of affection within religious life. Edwards writes that: "true religion, in great part, consists of holy affections" (2009, 95), resonating with Watts' assertion that it is his "[d]esign to treat of the *Exercises of the Passions, or Affections of the Heart in the Affairs of Religion*", and that his foundation for understanding the place of passion in religion is the proposition that "*The Lord our God is the proper Object of our most sincere Affection, and our Supreme Love*" (1729, 108; italics in the original). Watts divided the passions into several categories, and his 'chief' passions are wonder, love, hatred, esteem, and contempt (1729, 9). Lisa Shapiro, in her study of Descartes' *Passions of the Soul*, has drawn up a taxonomy of the primary passions in the writings of several influential philosophers, including Aquinas, Hobbes, and Spinoza, demonstrating that Watts is unique in following Descartes by including wonder among these primary passions (Shapiro 2006, 269).

8 Joy argues that Watts's insistence on diminishing and rejecting the traditional differences suggests that he is unclear of the necessity of maintaining such a distinction. This view not only assumes a lack of understanding on the part of Watts, but also is inconsistent with other writers who also use the terms synonymously (Joy 2013b).

9 Watts was a cautious supporter of the Evangelical Revivals of the 1730s and 1740s; he was supportive particularly of Whitefield's Calvinistic preaching, but had reservations regarding some enthusiastic elements of the movement (see Strivens forthcoming).

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

4 The Passions in Reformed Hymnody

Augustine's influence was to dominate the development of Reformed hymnody, regarding the relationship between singing and the passions. Augustine's view of music was complex;[10] he writes of experiences where hymns caused the affections of his devotion to overflow (Augustine 1984, 146), but also writes of the temptation and guilt over the way his affections are stirred in the things he experienced when singing of hymns in the praise of God (186). This tension was to reappear in Calvin's thought a millennium later. Calvin (1543) values the beauty of music but cautions against its powers:

> And in fact, we find by experience that it has a sacred and almost incredible power to move hearts in one way or another. Therefore we ought to be even more diligent in regulating it in such a way that it shall be useful to us and in no way pernicious. (95)

The evolution of Calvin's theology of music in the period between 1536-46 has been well documented (see Garside Jr. 1979), and the relationship between Augustine and Calvin clearly shown. The solution to the powerful and distorting potential of music is, as Calvin went on to advocate in the preface to his *Psalter*, to obey the commands of Scripture and only sing psalms. The centrality and clarity of Scriptures, Calvin believed, would regulate the affections of the singer, channelling them heavenward in praise, without the dangerous distraction of music's inherent beauty.

The origins of eighteenth-century hymnody lie within the "well-established tradition of Puritan heart religion" (Coffey 2016, 32). The history of hymnody in the Reformed tradition has been widely studied (Watson 1999, 42-132; Escott 1962, 67-100; Davis 1948, 188-96), demonstrating the monopoly held by Sternhold and Hopkins's *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1562) that would only eventually be broken by Watts. Exclusive psalmody would be debated throughout the seventeenth century, with both Augustine and Calvin overshadowing the pages of controversy, as the dispute around the appropriate use of the passions through music continued. Authors such as William Ames, William Perkins, and Richard Baxter all encouraged affectionate piety within believers, and the debate around exclusive psalmody followed similar lines.[11]

10 For an exploration of Augustine's view of music, see "St. Augustine: The Problems of Eloquence and Inordinate Love" in *A New Song in an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church* (Stapert 2006, 180-93).

11 Watts' annotations in Wilkins' *Ecclesiastes* demonstrate his familiarity with and appreciation for these authors.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Thomas Ford writes in 1653: “it is clear, That as God requires such a holy affection in his people, so he doth require some expressions suitable to that affection” (1653, 57). Elsewhere, Ford quotes Augustine directly, stating that “hymns are the praises of God with a song. If it be praise, but not the praise of God, ’tis not a hymn” (20-1). While Ford argued in favour of exclusive psalmody, Edward Leigh believed that Scripture permitted new songs to be written and sung so long as they were “agreeable to the Word of God”, commending the godly effect of singing these songs, saying: “and God knowing the efficacie of Poetry and Musick, to help memory and stirre up affection doth allow his people to use it for their own spiritual comfort” (Leigh 1662, 610). A generation later, Benjamin Keach argued that

> [w]e must sing with Affections; let your joyful Noise be from the sense of God’s Love in a dear Redeemer to your own Souls. Let it be by exciting your graces; let faith be in exercise in this Duty as well as in Prayer and under the Word. Let it be with inward Joy. (1691, 191-2)

Elsewhere, in the preface to his textbook, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, John Dennis bemoaned the current state of hymnody, describing the metre of Sternhold and Hopkins as “vile”; and he later wrote that “poetry by the force of the Passion, instructs and reforms the Reason; which is the Design of true Religion” (1704, 13).

In 1708, a series of sermons, *Practical Discourses of Singing in the Worship of God*, were published. Several themes regarding the use, purpose, and expression of passions appear across the lectures. Drawing support from Augustine’s experience in his *Confessions*, singing is described as “an *Affecting* Exercise, peculiarly fitted with special Advantage to raise holy Affections of Soul, and enliven every Grace” (Earle et al. 1708, 74). Therefore, the habit of lining out the psalms, where a designated clerk would read each line of the hymn for the congregation to sing it in reply, a practice heavily criticised by Isaac Watts, receives special criticism as a hindrance to the cultivation of godly affections. Not only does lining out break the singer’s understanding and flow of thought, but

> as the Musick and Sense of the Psalm is and must oftentimes be interrupted, so likewise must it be a great check upon our *Affections*, and a hindrance to the Exercise of our *Graces* in this Duty. (139-40)

The means by which the affections are raised through singing is dependent on a clear comprehension of the subject; “understanding what we sing, having the Sense whole and intire under our eye, our Affections are more easily excited, and assisted to *make melody to God in our Hearts*” (140; italics in the original). The same point is made in the second sermon, which states:

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> We must distinctly apprehend, and rightly conceive the Sense and Meaning of what we sing. It requires the proper Exercise of the Affections, the suitable working of the natural *Passions* answerable to the various Matter and the different Subject of our Song. (65-6)

The priority then becomes a clear apprehension of God as the object of worship; within the context of considering the infinite excellencies of God's divine nature, the "whole Perfection inspires the Matter of our Song, and the devoutest Affections of Soul" (98).

In sermon five, Mr. Newman puts forward an argument for songs that contain the doctrines of the New Testament, rather than only singing psalms taken directly from the Old Testament. Having established biblical reasons for his view, he refers his readers to "Mr. Watts' ingenious Essay on this Subject" for further satisfaction (154). The essay Newman refers to is Watts's "Preface" to his 1707 *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, in which Watts establishes his reasons for writing new hymns, breaking from the tradition of exclusive psalmody. Watts's "Preface" is one of a trilogy of works in which he particularly addresses the place of singing in the worship of God; the other two being his *Short Essay Toward the Improvement of Psalmody* (1707) and the "Preface" to his 1719 *Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament*. By surveying the three works at once, a clear view emerges of Watts's understanding of the cultivation and expression of passion through the act of worshipping God in song. Singing, as shall be seen, represents the intersection of internal and external forms of religion in his mind. He discusses this at greater length in his *Discourses*, condemning outwards acts that are absent of corresponding internal experiences:

> The Heart with all the inward Powers and Passions must be devoted to him in the first Place: This is Religion indeed. The great God values not the Service of Men, if the Heart be not in it: The Lord sees and judges the Heart; he has no Regard to outward Forms of Worship if there be no inward Adoration, if no devout Affection be employ'd therein. (Watts 1729, 108)

5 The Passions in Watts Hymnody

Watts's time at Rowe's Academy began to shape his thinking around the weaknesses in the practice of Dissenting hymnody. He later writes in his copy of Wilkins' *Ecclesiastes*, opposite page 230, of his admiration of Benjamin Keach, his disdain for Thomas Ford, and the contribution that Joseph Stennet had made to the arguments for gospel songs (Wilkins 1693, opp. 230). Watts was encouraged by his brother Enoch, in a letter dated March

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

1700, to publish his hymns.[12] The letter mocks various psalters: "Mason reduces this kind of writing[13] to a sort of yawning indifference, and honest Barton chimes us to sleep" (Milner 1845, 177). Similarly the hymns of Keach and Bunyan are "flat and dull" (178), while the publication of Isaac's hymns would provide a better solution, according to Enoch, who writes: "now when yours are exposed to the public view, these calumnies will immediately vanish" (179).

The contrast between the internal passions and the outward expressions of them is at the heart of Watts's doctrine of praise. His *Preface* to *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* begins with two statements, which highlight the disparity between the ideal of singing and the reality as Watts saw it. He begins his "Preface" with the exalted claim that "while we sing the Praises of our God in his Church, we are employ'd in that part of Worship which of all others is the nearest a-kin to Heaven" (Watts 1707, iii). Grieved that it is not on earth as it is in heaven, Watts goes on to summarise the practice as he has observed it among churches with the damning criticism that "'tis pity that this of all others should be perform'd the worst upon Earth" (Watts 1707, iii). Watts bemoans the "dull Indifference, the negligent and the thoughtless Air that sits upon the Faces" of the congregation, which he says could "tempt even a charitable Observer to suspect the Fervency of inward Religion, and 'tis much to be fear'd that the Minds of most of the Worshippers are absent or unconcern'd" (iii-iv).

As has been seen, Watts was grieved that religious use of the passions was being neglected in favour of cold and dry reasoning; reason alone was not sufficient to raise virtuous piety to what he perceived to be their rightful place without the aid of the passions and affections (1729, iv). He felt that there were two causes that ought to be blamed and held responsible for the dire state of psalmody. One cause is the habit of lining, and the other is the lyrical content of the existing psalters. To eliminate the practice of lining out, the publisher of Watts's *Psalms of David* gives specific instructions as to how the psalms ought to be sung, recommending that they are sung without reading line by line, and that if a clerk must be used to read the words, that they read the words in their entirety before the whole song is sung (1719, vi-vii). Watts has a high view of singing, and its role in the passions of the believer. He writes that: "The ART OF SINGING is a most charming Gift of the God of nature and designed for the Solace of our Sorrows and the Improvement of our Joys" (1721, i). While he admits that the metaphors within his lyrics are "generally sunk to the Level of vulgar Capacities" (1707, viii), he does state elsewhere that his ambition

12 Both Davis (1948, 197-8) and Milner (1845, 176-9) transcribe the letter in full.

13 That is, the exclusive psalmody primarily associated with Sternhold and Hopkins's Psalter.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

is to employ, “bright, warm and pathetic language, to strike the imagination or to affect the heart, to kindle the divine passions or to melt the soul” (1731, 84). He intends that this language be sung. Watts is convinced that singing is designed by God to serve the expression of devotional passion. He encourages the readers of the *Preface* to his *Psalms of David* to

> remember, that the very power of singing was given to human nature chiefly for this purpose, that our own warmest affections of soul might break out into natural or divine melody, and that the tongue of the worshipper might express his own heart. (1719, iii)

Similarly, he writes in his *Short Essays* that the purpose of singing is “to vent the inward devotion of our spirits in words of melody, to speak our own experience of divine things, especially our religious joy” (1800, 11). And this view is expressed in the hymn texts themselves, as he expects the singer to feel the passions he is intending to cultivate:

> Now to the Lord a noble Song!
> Awake my Soul, awake my Tongue,
> *Hosanna* to th’Eternal Name,
> And all his boundless Love proclaim.
> (Watts 1707, 120)
>
> Come, happy Souls, approach your God,
> With new melodious Songs,
> Come render to Almighty Grace,
> The Tribute of your Tongues.
> (174)

The second cause for the poor performance of singing among the worshippers of his day is that Watts believed that when singing, “spiritual Affections are excited within us” but that these affections cannot be fully realised by singing of Old Testament psalms and experiences (Watts 1707, vi-v). Likewise, in the “Preface” to his *Psalms of David*, Watts describes the experience of having the words of David on his tongue as something that “interrupts the holy melody, and spoils the devotion” (Watts 1719, xiv). Watts readily admits that the original words of the psalmist keep the “spring of pious passion awake” when sung by those who can understand them experientially, but observes that “our affections want something of property or interest in the words, to awake them at first and to keep them lively” (i). However, Watts ultimately hopes that his imitation of the Psalms, written through the lens of the New Testament, will correct this, intending that the singer “find by Sweet Experience any devout Affections raised” through his words (xxii). He hopes that the soul of the singer will be “pos-

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

sessed with a variety of divine affections, when we behold him who is our chief beloved hanging on the cursed tree" (1800, 11). It is unsurprising that Watts's most enduring hymn, *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, portrays the crucifixion of Jesus as being at the heart of the devotional life of the believer, while also stressing the divine and incarnate nature of Jesus as being both the "Prince of Glory" and "Christ my God", echoing the confession of faith from Thomas in John 20:28. Watts' primary intention through his hymns and psalms is to provide songs for Christians to clearly articulate the doctrines and experiences that belong to the New Covenant. In *The different Success of the Gospel*, he writes:

> But Souls enlightened from above,
> With Joy receive the Word;
> They see what Wisdom, Power and Love
> Shines in their dying Lord.
> (1709, 95)

Regarding Watts's perceived need for hymns about Christ, the state of Dissenting praise is summed up by Harry Escott who comments:

> In preaching and prayer Christ and His Cross were at the centre of the worshipper's thought, but when he sang his praises, it was as if Christ had never been born, had never died and rose again from the dead. (1962, 254)

Watts was grieved that Christians who only sang metrical psalms had no songs to express the joy of their salvation. Scholars have long established the link between Watts's theology and his hymnody; Manning describes Watts as having a cosmic view of the cross, as the central feature both of the universe and Christian doctrine (1942, 83); Crookshank observes that "Watts the logician argued that Old Testament Scripture viewed in New Covenant light both allowed and obligated him to Christianize the Psalms" (2004, 19); and Watson writes, "Watts' hymnody […] insists on the importance of revealed religion and on the saving grace of Jesus Christ" (1997, 135-6). This theme comes out in the hymn, *A Vision of the Lamb*, in which the opening verse concludes, "Behold amidst th' Eternal Throne | A Vision of the Lamb appears" before describing the experience of the worshipper:

> Our Voices joyn the Heav'nly Strain,
> And with transporting Pleasure sing,
> Worthy the Lamb, that once was slain,
> To be our Teacher and our King.
> (Watts 1707, 26)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

In his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* and then in his *Psalms of David*, Watts intended to provide the Church with songs that could voice the whole panorama of the affections – "the most frequent Tempers and Changes of our Spirit, and Conditions of our Life are here copied, and the Breathings of our Piety exprest according to the variety of our Passions" (Watts 1707, vii). Watts goes on to describe what this spectrum looks like; his songs are designed to give voice and expression to "our Love, our Fear, our Hope, our Desire, our Sorrow, our Wonder and our Joy, all refin' into Devotion, and acting under the Influence and Conduct of the Blessed Spirit" (vii). Watts locates the articulation of these passions within the sovereign workings of the Trinity; his hymns and psalms, and the affections they articulate, are "all conversing with God the Father by the new and living Way of Access to the Throne, even the Person and the Mediation of our Lord *Jesus Christ*" (Watts 1707, viii).

5.1 Sovereign Love

It has been said that no subject was more prominent in eighteenth-century hymnody than God's providence (Harlan 1979, 181). Watts writes that as "Foundation of these Discourses, I chose to treat the *Love of God*, which in a sovereign Manner rules and manages, awakens or suppresses all the other Passions of the Soul" (Watts 1729, vi). This theme appears frequently in his hymns, as the singer responds to the arousing influence of God's sovereign love at work, creating godly passions with them:

> Now shall my inward Joys arise
> And burst into a Song,
> Almighty Love inspires my heart
> And Pleasure tunes my Tongue.
> (1707, 38)

> Let God the Father live
> For ever on our Tongues;
> Sinners from his first Love derive
> The Ground of all their songs.
> (207)

> The Father's love shall run
> Thro' our Immortal sons,
> We bring to God the Son
> *Hosannas* on our Tongues:
>   Our lips address
>   The Spirit's Name

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

With equal Praise,
And Zeal the same.
(1709, 315)

Along with Edwards, who argues that "surely God is so sovereign [...] that he may enable us to do our duty when he pleases" (2009, 188), Watts sees the sovereign love of God as being the source of all godly passions, throughout the duration of the believer's life; his hymns allow the singer to voice their prayers and pleas that God would create and sustain these pious affections within them. Watts sees the believer as being ultimately dependent on God for this influence. He writes of "this sacred and sovereign Affection of divine Love", which "commands and influences, excites and subdues the other Passions of Nature" to ultimately constrain them all to be "subservient to its own great Designs, i.e. to the Honour and to the Enjoyment of God, the Object of this divine Affection" (1729, 146-7):

But Oh! How base our Passions are!
How cold our Charity and Zeal
Lord, fill our Souls with heavenly Fire,
Or we shall ne'er perform thy will.
(1709, 92)

Great God, subdue this vicious Thirst
This Love to Vanity and Dust;
Cure the vile Fever of the Mind,
And feed our Souls with Joys refin'd.
(259)

Renew mine Eyes, and form mine Ears
And mould my Heart afresh;
Give me new Passions, Joys and Fears,
And turn the Stone to Flesh.
(246)

John Coffey notes that Watts would have doubts over Athanasian orthodoxy in later life (2016, 39), but when he wrote his hymns he was unequivocal as to the nature of the Trinity, going so far as to describe it as the "peculiar Glory of the Divine Nature" (Watts 1707, 206). Watts sees the three persons of the Trinity as being involved in this process of subduing of sinful passions and the cultivation of godly affections; of the role of Christ, Watts writes in *The Distemper, Folly and Madness of Sin*:

Madness by Nature reigns within
The Passions burn and rage

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Till God's own Son with Skill Divine
The inward Fire asswage.
(1709, 265)

Watts also sees the Holy Spirit as being an essential component within the sovereign influence of God upon the believer's passions. When speaking of the fruits of the Spirit in the life of the believer,[14] he writes that the "sanctified Affections are so great Part of the new Creature, that the very Graces of the holy Spirit are called by their Names," concluding with the rhetorical question: "What is this blessed Catalogue of the Fruits of the Spirit, but the Passions of Nature refined and renewed by Grace?" (1729, 172-173). The necessity of the Holy Spirit in the cultivation of the passions is expressed throughout his hymns:

Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening Powers,
Kindle a Flame of sacred Love,
In these cold Hearts of ours.
(1707, 109)

Eternal Spirit, we confess
And sing the Wonders of thy Grace;
Thy Power conveys our Blessings down
From God the Father and the Son.
(1709, 248)

5.2 Wonder

As has been seen, one of the surest methods of cultivating godly passions commended by Watts to his readers was that time spent consciously reflecting upon their wonder at the uniqueness of an object produces greater degrees of affection for it; therefore, he urged that they continually fill themselves with wonder, towards God and the Christian gospel. Watts writes: "this Passion discovers itself by lifting up of the Hands of the Eyes, and by an intense fixation of the Sight or the Thoughts" (1729, 12). For Descartes, the passion of wonder is what makes learning possible (Fisher 2002, 10), and, according to Watts, the key to raising the passion of wonder is to "contemplate the Nature and Perfections of God" and to consider the "amazing Instances of his Providence and Grace which he has manifested in his Word" (1729, 57). The highest object of love is God, and this love

14 Galatians 5:22-3.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

is fuelled by wonder; “sincere and fervent Love is ever finding some new Beauties and Wonders in the Person so much belov’d” (126). Wonder perceives the degree to which an object is “rare and uncommon” and when this wonder is fixed upon God, the passion of love grows; “when so glorious and transcendent a Being as the great and blessed God becomes the Object of our Notice and our Love, with what Pleasure do we survey his Glories” (125).

This theme appears frequently in his hymns, as singers are encouraged to meditate upon, and subsequently wonder at, God. Singers, transported to the crucifixion scene, “survey” the “wondrous cross”; Watts’ use of equivocal, experiential lyrics allows the singer to locate themselves within the biblical narrative from which his hymns are drawn. The following hymns demonstrate the place of wonder as one of the primary passions in Watts’ thought, with a particular focus on the incarnate and redemptive revelation of Christ:

> Mortals with Joy beheld his Face,
> Th’Eternal Father’s only Son;
> How full of Truth! How full of Grace,
> When thro’ his Eyes the Godhead shone! (1707, 3)
>
> There I beheld with sweet Delight
> The blessed Three in One;
> And strong Affections fix my Sight
> On God’s Incarnate Son. (1709, 272)

The hymn *Longing to Praise Christ Better* begins: “Lord, when my Thoughts with wonder roll”, before speaking of “my Maker’s broken Laws | Repair’d and honour’d by thy Cross”. The second verse allows the singer to “behold” and “view” the ascended glory of Christ, and the third verse begins, “My Passions rise and soar above | I’m wing’d with Faith, and fir’d with Love” (1707, 82-3).

5.3 Death

Louise Joy argues that Watts’s view of the passions is death-centric: “Watts implies that affectionate religion is founded on a death wish” (2013b, 305). There are, however, several weaknesses inherent in this interpretation. While it is clear, and will become clearer, that Watts’s view of the passions is that they are only ultimately perfected when the believer passes from life to death, his view of death is far from morbid. He does not, as Joy says, undermine the desirability of the heavenly passions by recommending death as the only means by which they can be attained. Watts’s

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

optimistic view of death can be seen in his books, sermons, and hymns, and in holding this view he is consistent within the wider religious scene. He urges his readers to regulate their passions by living with an expectation of death (1729, 103); death, he states in a sermon, yields sweetness to the believer as the corrupt affections of flesh and blood are left behind (1753, 476, 478). Bragge observes that, while death is to be dreaded from a bodily perspective, the experience of death is a temporary evil, it is also the great cure that ends the miseries of the world (1708, 251-3). Similarly, Hutcheson writes that if death is the cessation of the pleasures and pains of life, then it is an inconsiderable evil. But, he goes on to say, if there is life beyond death, then for the virtuous, death can be seen as a "ground of Hope and Joy" (1728, 196-7).

Parisot (2011) and Van Leeuwen (2009) have demonstrated the connection between graveside poetry and funeral sermons; both were typically delivered by members of the clergy, and therefore their emphasis did not lie in the Gothic macabre, but upon the Christian afterlife. Many of Watts's hymns are filled with a hopeful view of death:

Jesus, the Vision of thy Face
Hath overpow'ring Charms,
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold Embrace
If Christ be in my Arms.
(1707, 20)

Then shall I see thy lovely Face
With strong immortal Eyes,
And feast upon thy unknown Grace
With Pleasure and Surprize.
(8)

Yes, and before we rise
To that immortal State,
The Thoughts of such amazing Bliss
Should constant Joys create.
(1709, 106)

Therefore death, in Watts' thought, is far from a morbid obsession, but rather it is the doorway to a perfected experience, and this view is consistent within his wider context.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

6 Conclusion

Passions played a significant role in the experience of post-Reformation spirituality, and Watts's doctrine of the passions was inherited from his Puritan forbearers and was expressed both in prose and hymnody. Watts stands as a break-through figure in Anglophone hymnody, creating a system of praise that allowed the expression of devotional piety through a more emphatically Christo-centric lyric, departing from the metrical psalmody of the seventeenth century that Watts saw as dampening the passions of the singer by neglecting to give voice to their Christian experience. In doing so, Watts introduced a new phase in English-speaking Protestant worship, as his hymns were adopted and adapted by Independents, Baptists, Anglicans, Unitarians, and Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic, and Watts would remain as the dominant hymn-writer for over two centuries.

Bibliography

Augustine of Hippo Saint (1984). *The Confessions of St. Augustine*. Westwood, N.J.: Christian Library

Beynon, Graham (2016). *Isaac Watts: Reason, Passion, and the Revival of Religion*. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark. DOI `https://doi.org/10.5040/9780567670168`.

Bragge, Francis (1708). *A Practical Treatise of the Regulation of the Passion*. London: J.M. for John Wyat.

Brinton, Alan (1992). "The Passions as Subject Matter in Early Eighteenth-Century British Sermons". *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 10(1), 51-69. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1525/rh.1992.10.1.51`.

Calvin, Johannes [1543] (2001). "Preface to the Genevan Psalter". McKee, Elsie Anne (ed. and transl.), *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*. New York: Paulist Press, 91-7.

Campbell, Ted A. (1991). *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Coffey, John (2016). "Between Puritanism and Evangelicalism: 'Heart-work' in Dissenting Communion Hymns, 1693-1709". Coffey, John (ed.), *Heart Religion: Evangelical Piety in England and Ireland, 1690-1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198724155.003.0002`.

Crookshank, Esther R. (2004). "'We're Marching to Zion': Isaac Watts in Early America". Noll, Mark A.; Mouw, Richard J. (eds)., *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History and Theology*. Grand Rapids (MC): Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 17-41.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Darwall, Stephen (1997). “Hutcheson on Practical Reason”. *Hume Studies*, 23(1), 73-89. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/hms.2011.0097.

Davis, Arthur P. (1948). *Isaac Watts: His Life and Works*. London: Independent Press Ltd.

Dennis, John (1704). *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*. London: Strahan and Lintott.

Dixon, Thomas (2003). *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dixon, Thomas (1999). “Theology, Anti-Theology and Atheology: From Christian Passions to Secular Emotions”. *Modern Theology*, 15(3), 297-330. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511490514.

Dixon, Thomas (2015). *Weeping Britannia: Portait of a Nation in Tears*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Earle, Jabez. et al. (1708). *Practical Discourses of the Practice of Singing in the Worship of God; Preach’d at the Friday Lecture at Eastcheap*. London: J. Darby and J. Philips.

Edwards, Jonathan (2009). *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2. Revised edition by John E. Smith. New Haven (CT): Yale University Press.

Escott, Harry (1962). *Isaac Watts: Hymnographer*. London: Independent Press Ltd.

Essary, Kirk (2017). “Passions, Affections, or Emotions? On the Ambiguity of 16th-Century Terminology”. *Emotion Review*, 9(4), 367-74. DOI https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073916679007.

Fesko, John V. (2014). *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights*. Wheaton: Crossway.

Fisher, Philip (2002). *The Vehement Passions*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400824892.

Ford, Thomas (1653). *Singing of Psalmes the Duty of Christians Under the New Testament: Or, a Vindication of that Gospel-ordinance in V. Sermons Upon Ephesians 5.19*. London: C. Meredith.

Frazer, Michael L. (2010). *The Enlightenment of Sympathy: Justice and the Moral Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century and Today*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195390667.001.0001.

Garside Jr., Charles (1979). “The Origins of Calvin’s Theology of Music: 1536-1543”. *American Philosophical Society*, 69(4), 1-36. DOI https://doi.org/10.2307/1006143.

Harlan, Lowell B. (1979). “Theology of Eighteenth Century English Hymns”. *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 48(2), 167-93.

Hutcheson, Francis (1728). *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections. With illustrations on the Moral Sense*. London: J. Darby and T. Browne.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Joy, Louise (2013a). “From Passion to Affection: The Art of the Philosophical in Eighteenth-Century Poetics”. *Philosophy and Literature*, 37(1), 72-87. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/phl.2013.0003.

Joy, Louise (2013b). “Morbid Pathos in Isaac Watts’ Philosophy of Affectionate Religion”. *Literature and Theology*, 27(3), 297-312. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/litthe/frs058.

Keach, Benjamin (1691). *The Breach Repaired in God’s Worship: or, Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Proved to be a Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ. With an Answer to all Objections*. London: Printed for the Author, and sold by John Hancock.

Van Leeuwen, Evert Jan (2009). “Funeral Sermons and Graveyard Poetry: The Ecstasy of Death and Bodily Resurrection”. *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 32(3), 353-71. DOI https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-0208.2009.00215.x.

Leigh, Edward (1662). *A Systeme or Body of Divinity, Consisting of Ten Books, Wherein the Fundamentals of Religion are Opened, the Contrary Errours Refuted*. 2nd ed. London: W. Lee.

Manning, Bernard (1942). *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts: Five Informal Papers*. London: Epworth Press.

Milner, Thomas (1845). *The Life, Times and Correspondence of the Rev. Dr. Isaac Watts*. London: Thomas Richardson and Son.

Parisot, Eric (2011). “Piety, Poetry, and the Funeral Sermon: Reading Graveyard Poetry in the Eighteenth Century”. *English Studies*, 92(2), 174-92. DOI https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838x.2010.536686.

Reynods, Edward (1640). *A Treatise of the Passions and Faculties of the Soule of Man. With the Several Dignities and Corruptions Thereunto Belonging*. London: Robert Bostock.

Rivers, Isobel (1991). *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language and Ethics in England, 1660-1780*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Strivens, R. (forthcoming). *Dissent and the Origins of the Evangelical Revival*.

Wallace, Dewey D. (2011). *Shapers of English Calvinism, 1660-1714: Variety, Persistence, and Transformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199744831.001.0001.

Watson, John Richard (1999). *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/019827002x.001.0001.

Watts, Isaac (1707). *Hymns and Spiritual Songs. In Three Books. I. Collected from the Scriptures. II. Compos’d on Divine Subjects. III. Prepared for the Lord’s Supper. With an Essay Towards the Improvement of Christian Psalmody, by the Use of Evangelical Hymns in Worship*. London: J. Humfreys for John Lawrence.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Watts, Isaac (1709). *Hymns and Spiritual Songs. In Three Books. I. Collected from the Scriptures. II. Compos'd on Divine Subjects. III. Prepar'd for the Lord's Supper*. London: J.H. for John Lawrence.

Watts, Isaac (1719). *The Psalms of David, Imitated in the Language of the New Testament, And Apply'd to the Christian State and Worship*. London: J. Clarky; R. Ford; R. Cruttenden.

Watts, Isaac (1721). "Thoughts on Poetry and Musick". Walter, Thomas (ed.), *The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained: Or, An Introduction to the Art of Singing by Note. Fitted to the meanest Capacities*. Boston: Benjamin Mecom.

Watts, Isaac (1729). *Discourses of the Love of God, and the Use and Abuse of the Passions in Religion, with a Devout Meditation Suited to Each Discourse, to which is Prefix'd a Plain and Particular Account of the Natural Passions, with Rules for the Government of Them*. London: J. Clark and R. Hett.

Watts, Isaac (1731). *An Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion Among Christians, and Particularly the Protestant Dissenters, by a Serious Address to Ministers and People, in Some Occasional Discourses*. London: E. Matthews.

Watts, Isaac (1753). *The Works of the Late Reverend and Learned Isaac Watts, D.D*. London: T. Longman.

Watts, Isaac (1800). *The Works of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D. in Seven Volumes*, vol. 7. Leeds: Edward Baines.

Wilkins, John (1693). *Ecclesiastes: or a Discourse Concerning the Gift of Preaching, As It Falls Under the Rules of Art*. London: J. Lawrence.

Wykes, David (1996). "The Contribution of the Dissenting Academy to the Emergence of Rational Dissent". Haakonssen, Knud (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 99-139.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Passionate Educations
John Locke, Aphra Behn, and Jane Austen

Aleksondra Hultquist
(Stockton University, US)

Abstract This article connects John Locke's concept of uneasiness to Aphra Behn's poem "On Desire: A Pindarick" and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*. Behn and Austen offer a corrected reading of Locke's overtly rationalist ideas. This comparison suggests the importance of passionate engagement as related to knowledge. This article uses a contemporary understanding of the long eighteenth-century passions to argue for how passionate experience and knowing might have occurred through the literary examples of Aphra Behn and Jane Austen.

Keywords Passions. Experience. Knowing. Desire. Uneasiness. Emotion. Feeling. Affect.

1 Introduction

In his recently published book *Knowing Emotions*, philosopher Rick Anthony Furtak states that "affective experience provides a distinct mode of perceptual knowledge and recognition – one that is unavailable to us *except* through our emotions" (2018, 1-2). His monograph is built upon the concept that, through affective experiences, we come to recognise truth, i.e. we come to know. As a professor of moral psychology in the tradition of existential thought, Furtak leaps between ancient theories of emotional integrity (Aristotle) and the morality of emotions in the nineteenth-century philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard. Yet his statement that emotions are a way of knowing was part of a crucial discussion that emerged in the long-eighteenth century. John Locke (1632-1704) was perhaps the most significant philosopher in the seventeenth century for theorising how we know what we know. In short, primary and secondary qualities create accrued experience and the "white paper void of all characters" fills with knowledge and results in action (Locke 1824, 2.1.§2). When this theory manifests in the works of Aphra Behn (1640?-1689) and Jane Austen (1775-1817), the two

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/010
Submitted: 2018-11-07 | Accepted: 2018-12-01

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

writers emphasise that experience cannot be divorced from affect: a mind feels as much as it perceives. In other words, affective experience creates a distinct way of knowing; the passions provide the potential for an education. The truth of any resultant action, Furtak's "perceptual knowledge and recognition" (2018, 1-2) is in the knowing. What Behn and Austen point out is that a passionate education does not always manifest in right action if it is ignored.

The passions were the system of emotional, physical, and moral well-being that explained how people respond to outward phenomena. Rather than a simple analogy to our current understanding of feelings or affect, the passions encompassed all of these concepts, and also described any kind of feeling, whether it was strictly emotional or not. One could feel the passion of joy or hunger. One could experience hate or curiosity. All of these were operations of the passions. At the turn of the seventeenth century in Britain, the passions were undergoing a change. They were moving from the body to the mind; from public to private. Slowly, and with digressions, the passions were becoming personal: they were becoming emotions (see Elster 1999; Gross 2006; Rorty 1982). Nevertheless, when scholars try to articulate feeling in the eighteenth century, as critics we are more likely to turn to the unhistorical vocabulary of emotions or affects. This article uses a contemporary understanding of the long eighteenth-century passions to argue for how passionate experience and knowing might have occurred through the literary examples of John Locke, Aphra Behn, and Jane Austen. When I use the terms 'passions' or 'passionate' I am referring to this system of feeling rather than the emotion of sexual longing; my terminology alternates between emotions, feelings, and sometimes affect to denote internal feeling.

There have been few sustained inquiries into the connections between Locke and Behn or Locke and Austen or Behn and Austen, and none of all three in conversation. This is curious because all three were interested in how the accrual of passionate experience was a method of education – of knowing more than one did previous to the passionate experience. It is important to examine Locke, Behn, and Austen as they mark the beginning and end point of the change from passions to emotions. Despite that transformation they are all grounded in similar ideas, which ideas are very different from our own concepts of emotion. It is important to compare them precisely because they are nearly one hundred fifty years apart: Behn may have drunk the philosophy that was in the air in the 1680s; Austen did so after digesting Locke, whose theories were popularized from *The Spectator* through *Rasselas*. In the end, I think all would agree that knowledge and ethics benefit from passionate learning, and there are detriments to ignoring feelings which prevent knowing and right action.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

2 Locke and Passionate Education: *An Essay* (1690)

As early modern philosophers go, John Locke does not immediately come to mind when theorising the passions – we are more likely to consider René Descartes or David Hume first. However, there has been critical energy between Locke's theories and the passions in eighteenth-century literary criticism. For instance, Joeseph Drury, Jonathan Kramnick, Helen Thompson, and Rebecca Tierney-Hynes are interested in the ways in which novelists and Locke can be used to understand one another in terms of action, will, and to a lesser extent, passionate language. But these theories relate predominantly to divesting the characters of their emotions and instead focusing on the importance of ideas and tacit consent (Drury 2008-09; Kramnick 2010; Thompson 2005; Teirney-Hynes 2012). All of these scholars focus on Lockean 'ideas' to articulate eighteenth-century subjectivities as opposed to formations of the passions. My addition to their work is that a contemporary view of the emotions helps us to better consider the ways in which Behn and Austen were representing the passions and their educational value, that experience gives rise to knowing.

To say that Locke was concerned with how we know what we feel, or how we learned about our emotions would be to wilfully misinterpret *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689-90) (henceforth *An Essay*).[1] While Locke is not a theorizer of the passions *per se*, he does dedicate part of *An Essay* to how the passions give rise to experience. Primarily, critics have discussed this causation in terms of action – that Locke 'moved' the passions from passive/bodily to active/mindful. The relocation of the passions into the mind means that they are no longer unthinking and automatic, no longer subject to public/group/social stimuli and shared experience. Passions become active, something that the mind works upon or actively stimulates, and so get reassigned a position in the bodily economy as being subject to the will.[2] Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse for instance argue that Locke enabled a vocabulary for the passions, and opened a category that not only gave rise to a debate about the rational operations of the mind, but also encouraged a sustained discussion of what we now call emotions (Armstrong, Tennenhouse 2006, 131). They note how

> Locke conspicuously removes the passions from the body and relocates their source in the ideas of pleasure and pain that we formulate on the basis of our sensations. (137)

1 *An Essay* contains the title page date of 1690, but was published in 1689.

2 For discussion on the relationship between passions and actions, please see James 1997.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Consequently, when Locke enables the passions to become an aspect of the will, they shift to how the mind translates the experience of pleasure or pain. More recently, Joel Sodano added that the passions' move from the body to the mind is subtler. Locke moves the passions from the body (where there is a bodily disease) to the mind, where it becomes uneasiness:

> when Locke introduces a metaphorical 'uneasiness' to replace 'disease' as the fundamental component of emotional experience, the tension between passivity and activity still remains even as the balance of power shifts to the active processes of rational thought. (Sodano 2017, 452)

According to Sodano, what is active or passive about the passions is never quite resolved, even as the mind becomes the centre of the emotions, even as passionate dis-ease becomes passionate un-ease. All three critics acknowledge Locke's contributions to how the experience of feeling spurs knowing.

Chapter XX "Of Modes of Pleasure and Pain", in Book II "Of Ideas," is a small section of Locke's *Essay*, but crucial in thinking about the relationship between Locke, Behn, Austen, and the conversation of the passions. For Locke, our passions can be either positive or negative depending on how they provide pleasure or pain. Additionally, Locke claims that

> pleasure or pain, delight or trouble [...are] simple ideas, [and] cannot be described, nor their names defined; the way of knowing them is, as of the simple ideas of the senses, only by experience. (Locke 1824, 2.20.§1)

As in his epistemology of ideas, he maintains that only through accrued sensation can we know what we feel, and only through experience can knowing occur. Like ideas, then, pleasure and pain (the main categories under which all passions fall) can only be known through the accumulation of passionate experience, because "[p]leasure and pain, and that which causes them, good and evil, are the hinges on which our passions turn" (2.20.§3). Moreover, Locke says that "[t]he uneasiness a man finds in himself upon the absence of any thing, whose present enjoyment carries the idea of delight with it, is that we call desire" (2.20.§6). The passion of desire is marked by dis-ease, or uneasiness, and Locke claims "the chief, if not only spur to human industry and action, is uneasiness" (2.20.§6) – we feel, therefore we act.

Jonathan Kramnick has explained this in terms of action: "In order to do something, Locke argues, one must not only have a desire to achieve some end, one must feel uneasy in the absence of this end"; Locke emphasises "the experience with which [actions] are accompanied" (Kramnick 2010,

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

141).[3] Action therefore comes from experience, or knowing, and that knowing arises when the passions are not at ease: we feel, we know, we act to resolve unease. I posit that the special kind of knowledge that comes from this process is emotional understanding, what in current parlance is known as emotional intelligence. The slow accumulation of passionate understanding and the uneasiness of feeling then lead to knowledge – the actions that result from that knowledge, however, are contested in Behn and Austen. This process is passionate education and it recurs in the writing of the long eighteenth century.

3 Behn and Passionate Knowing: "On Desire: A Pindarick" (1688)

Behn and Locke were contemporaries on opposing sides of the political spectrum in the 1680s. Private secretary to Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury, tutor to the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, and fellow traveller on the ship that brought William and Mary from the Netherlands to London in the wake of the Glorious Revolution (1688), Locke was firmly (and visibly) in the Whig camp. Behn was deeply loyal to the Stuarts and is nearly always connected with a Stuart-Tory mindset; her dedications are written to Jacobite nobles and her Pindaric odes on the Stuarts are profuse (see Todd 1996; Spencer 2000; and Markley 1988). Behn's and Locke's writing temporally coincided. Behn's *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684-1687) reimagine Monmouth's rebellion, which many believed Shaftesbury to have orchestrated; Locke fled to Holland with Shaftesbury shortly after. *Lycidas*, the collection of poetry in which "On Desire: A Pindarick" (hereafter "On Desire") was published, and *An Essay* were published one year apart: 1688 and 1689, respectively. *An Essay* had been in draft form for many years before its publication, and it is likely that "On Desire" had as well.[4] However, both Locke and Behn share an even deeper, and insufficiently appreciated symmetry in the way that they theorise desire: what it is and how it accrues and thus, how experience is necessary to the passions, especially in terms of passionate knowing.

The experience of Locke's uneasiness is extended in Behn – those who have not experienced desire are devoid of passionate knowing, in Behn's eyes. For her, as well as for Locke, the accrual of the simple experiences

3 According to Kramnick, the latter concept is prevalent in the second edition of *An Essay* (1694), written after extensive correspondence with the Irish philosopher William Molyneux.

4 Todd notes that "On Desire" was a very different kind of poem than the rest in *Lycidas* (1996, 397); I believe it is similar in theme and heightened passions to the 1684 *Poems Upon Several Occasions*, and that it may have been in draft form prior to 1684.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

creates complex ideas, generates the passions, and thus enables knowing. For Locke, these are necessarily and easily cordoned off in terms of good and evil. But Behn is wiser about how knowledge actually works, that the uneasiness created by desire is precisely what is needed to actually experience and learn. For Locke, the uneasiness that creates desire is important because that lack of equilibrium makes one act to restore balance. For Behn, the actions create desire which in turn creates knowledge; desire causes knowing rather than being a spur to action. Thus, the paradoxical nature of desire is both what makes it delightful and an impetus for experience.

She investigates this paradox in “On Desire”, which certainly encapsulates the notion of uneasiness, both dis-ease and disease-as-desire is a plague for Behn. The difference is that for Behn the accrual of the simple ideas that create experience is greater than Locke’s uneasiness; it is a form of emotional knowing. She paints the creation of desire as paradoxical pleasure and pain, as in Locke. But for Behn the coexistence of both creates a pleasurably painful experience – there is no action to be taken, only information to be known. The uneasiness of the speaker demonstrates the delightful torture of desire and similar depictions that are extremities of uneasiness. Behn’s uneasiness is a form of the passions that cannot spur on action – or rather it is a state on which to reflect. Behn’s uneasiness results in frustration, for sure, but also encourages a contemplation on what that dis-ease can mean and what can be learned from it. The difference between Behn and Locke, then, is that, for the latter, the unease of desire is a temporary inessential mental state that, when it appears, works to stimulate action to remove that unease and return to a settled mental state. However, for Behn desire is fundamental. The passions figure in all experience and learning, and, when one is dis-eased by the passion of desire, this does not easily lead to an action that relieves it. Instead it creates a space of intense reflection, or passionate experience.

The poem holds a strange place in Behn’s oeuvre, itself a seemingly disparate collection of plays, poems, fiction, letters, and translations. This irregular Pindaric follows the interior musings of a speaker who is caught in the web of desire and is trying to understand what has happened to her. She remembers that she never felt desire before, even when the object of that desire was worth desiring. She tries to understand what provoked the change and discovers that it is not so much the object of her love, Lysander, that she desires, but rather the experience of desire itself. As “On Desire” is not a pastoral (indeed the metaphors are particularly courtly), nor political (the subject matter is decidedly on love), it has slipped through the critical cracks of poetic analytical scholarship of her work. While much has

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

been said about her political poetry[5] and while her pastoral tradition has been appropriately addressed (see Gardiner 1993; Markley, Rothenberg 1993; Munns 2006), "On Desire" does not entirely belong to either of these analytical categories, and may be the reason that it is rarely published upon.[6] Because of this dearth of critical discourse, I would place the poem in the Pindaric tradition of the seventeenth century, which demonstrates how the paradoxical nature of the form is the perfect vehicle for the passion of uneasiness that leads to knowing.

The Pindaric style, imitated throughout the early modern period in England and Europe, maintained the stricter form of the ancient Pindaric, based upon the tri-part structure of a Greek chorus (strophe, antistrophe, epode). It was a celebratory communal form and used specifically for expressing high-wrought emotion. By the seventeenth century the Pindaric ode was still a genre of public encomium, but the form underwent a shift with the publication of Abraham Cowley's *Pindarique Odes* (1656). Cowley is generally thought responsible for creating and popularising the irregular ode, what Christopher Loar has referred to as the neo-Pindaric, which became the standard in public poetry through the mid-eighteenth century (2015, 128).[7] Joshua Scodel has said that the Pindaric ode was "the major later-seventeenth-century innovation in English lyric poetry" (Scodel 2001, 183). The most central interpretation of the neo-Pindaric, and particularly John Dryden's and Behn's odes, was that they were a vehicle for political propaganda that encode both acquiescence to, and criticism of, its subject, a kind of writing known for "grandiloquent obscurity, which makes interpretation difficult and licenses ambiguity" (Scodel, 2001, 184). Recent criticism also notes the satiric and paradoxical forms of the neo-Pindaric, especially in Behn's writing. Stella P. Revard, for instance, argues that Behn uses sexual politics ironically in her Pindarics when it serves her purposes. When asked to write a Pindaric ode by Burnet on the ascension of William III, as loyal Jacobite she would not comply, but as an English subject she could not refuse:

> So she overpraises Burnet and underpraises herself as a poor weak female, thus neatly sidestepping Burnet's request and exposing his less than honorable purpose. (Revard 1997, 237)

5 See especially Revard (2009, chapters 4 and 5). See also, Zook who argues that Behn's poetry "is particularly useful at illuminating her political vision" (Zook 2006, 48).

6 Todd (1996, xxx) refers to it as one of many of Behn's competent, energetic works of the first order, and notes that its topic of fiery illness was an outlier from the rest of the poems in *Lycidas*, which tend toward playful friendliness (1996, 397).

7 The introduction of the neo-Pindaric grieved Congreve (1706), who claimed in *A Discourse on the Pindarique Ode* that the worst of these odes are "*the most confus'd Structures in Nature*" (italics in the original).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

For many Restoration writers, when the neo-Pindaric praises, it performs a sleight of hand. Revard and Loar demonstrate how the genre employs ironic modes that both compliment and take away the compliment at the same time, thus finding space between the "real and ideal" (Loar 2015, 130).

That Behn's description of desire takes place within the Pindaric form is a bit of a mystery until these ironic and paradoxical structures are understood. While the 'public' Pindaric ode was generally comprehended in contrast to the more personal Horatian ode, Revard notes that

> the Pindaric ode was perceived as a heterogeneous medium, a poetic catch-all which could be used to address persons great and small and which was equally adaptable for subjects high and low. (Revard 2009, 257)

Behn's deliberate titling of her ode as a 'Pindarick' emphasises a universal recognition of desire. It is a subject that could be high or low, personal or public. In other words, the title makes desire a public subject through neo-Pindaric constructions. "On Desire" makes use of the structure to overtly praise and to avert praise, so the addressee is personal and abstract, desire is real and ideal, and the irregularity and paradoxical praise of the form emphasise the uneasy aspects of experiencing desire.

The poem opens in this oxymoronic form, immediately addressing desire as a "new-found pain" (l. 1) and expressing it as an "inchanting" "infection" (ll. 3, 2) that contaminates the speaker's "unguarded Heart" (l. 8). The poem continues in the same way, praising desire in the high-wrought emotional form that is so fundamental in the Pindaric encomium. As the poem goes on, it demonstrates how the experience of the passion of love is the basis for knowing. First, the speaker explains the extent of the dominion that desire has over her heart in terms of how much it has taught her – she figures herself as the best experiencer of desire; she is more knowing than those who simply pretend to understand what desire is.

The poem addresses a personified Desire, and the speaker chastises him[8] for being impetuous, for causing her uneasiness. He will not come when called and he will not come when the opportunity best presents itself:

> Where wert thou, oh, malicious spright,
> When shining Honour did invite?
> When interest call'd, then thou wert shy,
> Nor to my aid one kind propension brought,

8 I gender desire here as male because Behn connects the personified desire with Lysander, a typically masculine pastoral name. But it is important to acknowledge that, for Behn, love and desire are fluid, not bound by heterosexual boundaries. *Lycidas* is filled with poems praising female cabals, for instance.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Nor wou'd'st inspire one tender thought,
When Princes at my feet did lye.
(ll. 24-9)

Desire is not present when an object worthy of the speaker's desire appears, such as when the beloved is honorable, rich, or high-ranked. The sleight of hand demonstrates desire as welcome as well as impetuous, unforgiving, and dishonorable. The speaker then points out that neither will desire come when the object is young, powerful, well-spoken, nor beautiful. Her engagement in trying to understand desire forces the speaker to better know what she feels and what she thinks.

The most important lesson that the speaker comes to know through her conflicted feelings is that she is in love *with Desire* rather than the man who inspires her desire:

Yes, yes, tormenter, I have found thee now;
And found to whom thou dost thy being owe,
'Tis thou the blushes dost impart,
For thee this languishment I wear,
'Tis thou that tremblest in my heart
When the dear Shepherd do's appear.
(ll. 67-72)

In these lines, Behn demonstrates her knowing through her feelings; that is, her experience of uneasiness at the dear shepherd's (Lysander's) arrival. Desire itself trembles in her heart, but the object of desire is less important than the all-encompassing experience of it: desire, now internalised, torments her, makes her blush, languish, and tremble. In other words, the fact of knowing desire is more significant than the object of desire. And her description of the experience of desire is described as internal suffering set off by the dear Lysander, but experienced in the speaker's body as the lover itself:

I faint, I dye with pleasing pain,
My words intruding sighing break
When e're I touch the charming swain
When e're I gaze, when er'e I speak.
(ll. 73-6)

Ecstatic, erotic pain is caused by the physical effects of desire, rather than by Lysander. Her experience of desire is tactile as well as internally moving. The passion floods, invades, and makes her physically burn with discomfort, a discomfort so intense that she cannot understand how those who claim to have known love can conceal their experience.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Like Locke, then, Behn's discourse of the passions results in uneasiness, though her description points to something far more intense that mere unease: it is a welcome plague, a pleasing pain, a wanted torture. The experience of a passion (here desire) is painful, as Locke would say. But it does not function as a kind of temporary or inessential emotional response that must be resolved by action. Instead, the passionate experience that generates desire is a prompt for more passionate experience, more learning. In this case it comes from a second-order experience of reflecting on the passion itself and coming to know more about the passion and the real-world experience that generated the passion. So there is knowledge gained about the nature of desire as passion, as well as knowledge about what is and is not Lysander's role. By these lights, desire is a welcome plague because it generates a deeper knowledge as well as a richer, more passionate experience.

Physical descriptions of the consuming nature of desire are explained as a disease, arising from the dis-ease of her soul, causing "burning feaverish fits" (l. 86), a "fierce Calenture [to] remove" (l. 88). The calenture is a purposeful choice that connects physical passion and illness. Originally it was a disease that sailors got, which made them burn with fever, see mirages of land on the sea, and then drown themselves when they attempted to walk on the non-existent land. Eventually, it came to refer to the physical effects of any hallucinatory illness; to remove a calenture was to end burning, fever, and glowing heat. Finally, by means of these kinds of figurative usage, the word also came to refer to passion, ardour, or zeal – the sorts of emotion that could cause intense feelings of dis-ease and which one must remove from the soul in order to be cured of them.[9] The triple meaning of calenture expresses the speaker's painful struggles with desire: madness, illness, ardor, unease, disease. Like an illness, desire is experienced and cured, and leaves the sufferer with knowledge of the thing itself. Rather than spurring action, the uneasiness of the passion spurs knowledge.

The importance of the experience of desire as knowledge is heightened in the final third of the poem in which the focus shifts from the speaker's feelings to the actions of those around her. The speaker questions those who do not show the effects of desire. She asks those who have experienced desire: "How tis you hid the kindling fire?" (l. 90). For the speaker, desire causes fever, fire "rising sighs" (l. 99), and manifests physically in parts of the body that can be seen, like the eyes (l. 100). In the 1697 publication of the poem, two extra lines are interpolated that underscore the question of the speaker's confusion over how lovers can hide desire. She asks how "not the Passion to the throng make known, | Which *Cupid*

9 See "calenture, n." and "calenture, v.". *OED Online* (2018). URL `http://www.oed.com/search?searchType=dictionary&q=calenture&_searchBtn=Search` (2019-02-26).

in revenge has now confin'd to one" (Behn in Todd 1992, 472; italic in the original); in other words, how can those hit by desire hide it effectively? The speaker lights on what she sees as the only answer: one cannot prevent desire from manifesting physically – it must mean that those who do not display the feverish symptoms of desire have never had that disease in the first place. Those who claim to control the manifestation of desire in their bodies are liars:

> Oh! wou'd you but confess the truth,
> It is not real virtue makes you nice:
> But when you do resist the pressing youth,
> 'Tis want of dear desire, to thaw the Virgin Ice.
> (ll. 91-4)

The modesty, the very virtue, of the women who will not bow to desire is false modesty: they do not bow because they have not actually known what it is to desire so intensely. Therefore their 'want' of, their lack of (and perhaps their craving for), desire makes them virtuous, not their heroic resistance. Their "virtu's but a cheat, | And Honour but a false disguise" (ll. 103-4). They can remain as cool as ice because they are not fired. They can remain virtuous and healthy because they have not been fully tempted by the illness of passion. In short, they have never had the uneasiness that desire requires to understand or know; thus, their actions are false. And their lack of passionate experience has limited their stock of knowledge and circumscribed the scope of their understanding. In short, they have not had the opportunity for a passionate education.

The speaker finishes the poem by praising experience. She better knows herself now that she has had practice with arbitrary, all-encompassing, pressing desire. She tells those unaffected by desire to

> Deceive the foolish World– deceive it on,
> And veil your passions in your pride;
> But now I've found your feebles by my own,
> From me the needful fraud you cannot hide.
> (ll. 107-10)

Because the speaker has experienced desire, she knows what it is, what it can do, and that it cannot truly be hidden. Those who can "veil [their] passions in [their] pride" have a weakness, but their weakness is not that of succumbing to desire, but rather having had no experience of it in the first place – therefore acting a lie. Early in the poem, the speaker has fashioned herself as resistant to all forms of desire: money, rank, cleverness, beauty. She invokes this resistance in the last lines and acknowledges that her guard has come down, that Lysander has found the weakness of her sex, though

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the rest of the world is perplexed by her previous virtue. The mighty power of desire educates her through experience. The affective experience of a passion like desire creates a paradoxical knowledge, an uneasiness that provokes learning. The actions are false in those who are not educated in the passions. And the entire system of the passions is engaged in this discovery: the speaker's mind, heart, body, personal ideas, and public engagement.

Behn claims that to know a passion is to be educated. The experience, the acknowledgement, and the understanding of a passion is crucial: it creates knowledge about personal feelings and the feelings of others. This experience creates a clear path to knowing; it is a passionate education. Similarly, Austen underscores the passions' ability to create knowledge in *Mansfield Park*. Yet Austen argues that if passions are disregarded, that ignorance has the potential to create disastrous consequences. If Behn argues that those who deny their feelings are liars, Austen takes it a step further, and calls them adulterers.

4 Austen and Passionate Unknowing: *Mansfield Park* (1815)

We have no evidence that Austen read Locke directly, though she would have been familiar with his concepts through popular works, such as Samuel Johnson's Lockean gestures in *The History of Rasselas* (1759) or the *Idler* (1758-1760), both of which are alluded to in *Mansfield Park* (see Halsey 2005; De Rose 1983). Likewise, there is no direct evidence that Austen read Behn, though the two are sometimes set together as links in a feminised genealogy of literature (Spencer 1986; Todd 2012). However, all three are connected in their understanding of how the passions give rise to knowledge, especially in terms of the experience of desire. As it is for Behn so it is for Austen: passionate experience is crucial to one's education. But while for Behn there is a pleasurable pain in the uneasiness of the passions, Austen demonstrates that once uneasiness is ascertained, if it is not properly grappled with, it can have disastrous effects. In both authors' work the importance of the passions is in knowing them; and both of them believe that the action that comes from not acknowledging that knowing is false action.

The scholarship on *Mansfield Park* is copious, but in terms of critical readings it grows out of three classic critical examinations: Marilyn Butler's, who argues for the theme of mis-education and thus the defunct morality of Mansfield Park's inhabitants; Claudia Johnson's, who reads the domestic space of the novel as political, especially in terms of gender's constitutive aspects of politics; and Edward Said's orientalist argument, which has in turn made Fanny a moral keeper of the Empire (Butler 1975; Johnson 1998, 95; Said 1993). Some aspects of the criticism have touched on Austen's relationship to Lockean empiricism and some on the passions.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Very few scholars have examined the Austen-Locke connection, especially in terms of the vocabulary of the passions. Those that echo the vocabulary of Locke do so through the concept of ideas or actions rather than the experience of passionate knowing. For instance, Peter L. De Rose (1983) argues that Austen was likely most familiar with Locke through Johnson's writing – while we cannot be sure she read the former, we know she read the latter. He claims that a close reading of Locke clarifies the notion of imagination in *Northanger Abbey*, that one cannot truly understand "imagination" until one understands the "direct experience of sensory reality" (Johnson's *Rasselas* quoted in De Rose 1983, 63). Only then can *Northanger Abbey* be properly understood as a parody of the dangerousness of imagination or a comedy of moral lessons. Claudia J. Martin (2008) argues that Austen makes more sense when compared directly to Locke than through the intermediary of Johnson. She makes use of Locke's term 'happiness' to articulate the significance of emotion in character development in the Chawton novels:

> Locke, like Austen, is quick to distinguish between temporary or expedient pleasures and real happiness; […] those characters who achieve the happiness of a suitable marital union in Austen's novels follow a course of consideration, evaluation, and restraint as predicate to their making those morally correct choices that will further their pursuit–a plot that suggests Austen's familiarity with Locke's theoretical constructions regarding happiness.

Martin's connection between Austen's happily married characters and the Lockean concepts of consideration, evaluation, and restraint echo the vocabulary of Locke on ideas, rather than Locke on feeling. Neither scholar deals directly with Locke, Austen, and the passions.

Additionally, Austen is rarely associated with the passions. Until recently, the concepts for passion (as in Maria Bertram Rushworth's sexual desire for Henry Crawford) and the passions (an emotional system with which Austen and her readers were familiar) have been conflated in modern criticism.[10] This is intriguing as a number of the articles on *Mansfield Park* use feelings as a method of analysis, though rarely making them the centre of the conversation, or taking the historical viewpoint of the passions into consideration.[11]

10 See for instance Grandi 2008; Sandock 1988; Raw, Dryden 2013. There are exceptions that use the term 'passions' in its eighteenth-century contexts, as for instance Nagle 2005.

11 See for instance Judith Burden (2002), who reads the moral failings of the characters as evidence of the inherent irony in *Mansfield Park*. Similarly, a crucial part of Jacquelin M. Erwin's (1995) argument depends on the Ward sisters' ignorance of their emotions, but her analysis settles on the kinds of domestic space that lead to moral erosion rather than emotional ignorance.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Exceptions exist; both Summer J. Star and Stephanie M. Eddleman make eloquent arguments regarding Fanny's repressed anger (Star 2008; Eddleman 2008).[12] Nevertheless the discourse of emotions in Austen's critical reception is often limited to Fanny's sensibility and morality, the two most notable being Butler (1975), who reads Fanny's sentimentalism against Maria's self-indulgence, and Johnson (1998), who claims that *Mansfield Park* is in fact an ironic reading of the conservative ideas of Edmund Burke, of emotion, and women. Read through Locke's and Behn's importance of experience and uneasiness, Maria's passionate education is more at fault than her moral one. The actions she takes to marry Rushworth and elope with Crawford are poor choices because she fails to acknowledge her passionate knowing. Sir Thomas realises, much too late, that he has not understood his daughters' "inclinations and tempers" and blames himself for failing to provide "active principle" in their moral education (Austen 2003, 430); he never understands that he has neglected their passionate education as well.

Maria's falling in love with Henry Crawford offers an opportunity for both father and daughter to be educated through the uneasiness of their passions. Her feelings for Crawford when her father returns from Antigua are "in a good deal of agitation" (178), her uneasiness abounds. When Sir Thomas and Crawford first meet, "Maria saw with delight and agitation the introduction of the man she loved to her father. Her sensations were indefinable" (179). Maria's uneasiness about Crawford is set against her clearer feelings on the departure of her fiancé; she reflects that if Crawford will now speak up, he might "save [Mr. Rushworth] the trouble of ever coming back again" (178). For Crawford she is all agitated feeling; for Rushworth she is indifferent. The acuity of this uneasiness peaks when she finds Crawford will not speak, that "[h]e was going" despite "[t]he hand which had so pressed hers to his heart!" (179-80). Her pleasure in her recollection of her love for him and the realisation that his love will not be returned create an unease described by Austen as acute distress. Austen tells us that Maria's "spirit supported her, but the agony of her mind was severe" (180). Her conflicting passions – love for Crawford, disappointment in his not returning her love, and pride – create the agony of Lockean uneasiness rather than Behn's paradoxical pleasurable pain. As in Behn, uneasiness does not at first create action. She sits still as her passions become clear in their conflict, but "she had not long […] to bury the tumult of her feelings;" for "[h]e was gone", leaving her in a Lockean condition of uneasiness (180). The accrual of passionate experience should educate her to her feelings, but it does not.

Maria's uneasy passions are so strong that even the staid and stoic Sir Thomas picks up on them, although he too fails to learn – to know – about

12 See also Trigg 2015 on the importance of emotional communication through facial expressions in all of Austen's novels.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the significance of her feelings. He recognises Maria's hostility towards Mr. Rushworth and "trie[s] to understand *her* feelings" (186; italic in the original). When he says he will act to release her from the engagement, "Maria ha[s] a moment's struggle as she listened, and only a moment's"; she is soon able to give her answer "immediately, decidedly, and with no apparent agitation" (186). She will marry Mr. Rushworth. This meeting results in her pledging "herself anew to Sotherton" (187). She realises that both her dislike for Mr. Rushworth and her disappointed feelings about Crawford's love must better be concealed – a conclusion that denies her (and Sir Thomas's) uneasiness and prevents the chance for emotional knowing. Austen implies that paying closer attention to their passionate uneasiness might have saved the family from the devastation of her eventual adultery:

> Had Sir Thomas applied to his daughter within the first three or four days after Henry Crawford's leaving Mansfield, before her feelings were at all tranquillized, before she had given up every hope of him […] her answer might have been different. (187)

This "different" answer would have been based on her 'un-tranquillized' feelings for Crawford and provided the passionate experience that could lead to a better marriage choice – or no marriage at all. Austen uses dramatic irony to explain that Sir Thomas is "too glad to be satisfied perhaps", deciding that "[Maria's] feelings probably were not acute; he had never supposed them to be so" (186). Despite the uneasiness that prompts him to talk with her on this important decision, despite an uneasiness that should lead to right action, despite saying earlier in the scene that he will "act for her and release her" (186), Sir Thomas ignores his feelings and decides that Maria probably is not upset by hers – a dire misreading in the world of the novel. In the end, he acts by not acting to end a marriage he knows will be emotionally mismanaged.

According to Austen,

> "[i]n all the important preparations of the mind [Maria] was complete; being prepared for matrimony by an hatred of home, restraint, and tranquillity; by the misery of disappointed affection and contempt of the man she was to marry. The rest might wait. (188)

Austen highlights the *emotional* aspects of Maria's miseducation, not the moral ones: "*hatred* of home", "*misery* of disappointed affection", "*contempt* of the man she is to marry" (188; emphasis added). In this reading, Maria's denying her passions is the destructive beginning of her doomed marriage. Crucially, Maria ignores the potential of self-knowledge because of her mismanagement of passionate experience. Sir Thomas misses an educational opportunity because he is blinded by his wish to expand the family's wealth

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

and social status. Yet, had Maria considered her passions, acknowledged uneasiness, harmonised the resulting action with those passions, the tale must have ended differently, Austen implies. This episode is a strong example of how unacknowledged uneasiness causes problems. Maria feels the Lockean desire in her intense feelings for Crawford but, unlike Behn's speaker, does not learn from her uneasiness. Sir Thomas also feels Lockean unease but does not act on the feeling in a profitable way. Both characters do not do what they are supposed to do when desire arises; they neither act, nor learn.

Nearly all of the characters involved in the adultery are unable to be educated through their passions, especially Crawford's self-centred passions: pride, curiosity, and vanity. When Crawford again meets Maria and flirts with her – trying to make "Mrs. Rushworth, Maria Bertram again" (434) – he does not value the negative effects of indulging in uneasy passions. Austen specifically notes that had he been able to acknowledge his anger at Fanny, he "might have saved them both" (434). Crawford's inability to read both Fanny's and Maria's feelings places him and Maria in a condition of social danger that upsets both families. He is tripped up by his own vanity and "he had put himself in the power of feelings on [Maria's] side, more strong than he had supposed. – She loved him; there was no withdrawing attentions, avowedly dear to her" (434). His inability to properly understand strong emotion prevents passionate knowing, and he is compelled to commit adultery with Maria through emotional ignorance: "he [goes] off with her at last because he [can]not help it" (434-5). Crawford does not acknowledge Locke's uneasiness until he cannot save them both. Austen presumes to understand Crawford's unease after the fact: "vexation […] must rise sometimes to self-reproach, and regret to wretchedness". Yet his unease comes too late (435) – he misses his lesson and the resulting action is a product of not attending to the potential of passionate knowledge. Without the ability to recognise his own unease, or the unease that he creates in others, he loses respectability, friends, and Fanny, "the woman whom he had rationally, as well as passionately loved" (435).

Austen's narrator accords all of this disruption to a lack of a moral compass in Maria and Crawford. The latter's education is "ruined by early independence and bad domestic example" (433); his money and his uncle, who lives openly with his mistress, are the root of his lack of principle. However, the text also underscores that his ignorance of his own feelings, and the fact that he toys with the feelings of others, is also at fault. Throughout the novel Crawford is aloof and careless of others' emotions. When he arrives at Mansfield, early in the book, he decides to please the Miss Bertrams by "making them like him. He did not want them to die of love; but…he allowed himself great latitude on such points" (43). Careless at best and viciously selfish at worst, he misses the potential education he could get out of recognising his negative passions.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Maria's moral compass, too, is faulted. Fixed in the mismanagement of her "anxious and expensive education" (430), effected by the opposing rationales of Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris, her learning is defective. Sir Thomas certainly repines at his method of educating his daughter – her accrued knowledge has not had the moral effect he thought it would. Yet he misses the fact that he should have never allowed her to marry a man that she does not love. Underlying all of this is the fact that the passions – the conflicting feelings, the uneasiness inspired by love and pride – have not been fully experienced or understood by Maria, her father, and her lover. Maria Rushworth is not a victim of her immorality, but rather a poor student of her own emotional intelligence; she fails in her passionate education. The novel may therefore be as much a demonstration of the dangers of denying the passions as it is a triumph of morals.

5 Conclusion

Locke argues that passionate uneasiness leads to action, and Behn and Austen sophisticatedly re-deploy Locke's uneasiness. Where Locke talks about passion as pleasure or pain, which then is a prompt to action, Behn and Austen argue that emotional knowing must come first and right action can only be taken if affective knowing is acknowledged. For the latter authors, the importance of emotional experience is not necessarily action, but learning. Behn's speaker is able to recognise that the uneasy experience of desire provides an education about her passions; she knows more than those who pretend to have desire. Austen's characters experience emotional sensations, have the potential to acknowledge the lessons of those passions but fail to know – or at least fail to act rightly on that passionate knowledge. The attendant misunderstanding manifests itself in chaos rather than equilibrium. Such characters, while often read as passionately impetuous and morally corrupt, are also ignorant of what their passions can teach. Their passionate education is as much at fault as their moral one. The affective experience of Behn's speaker and Austen's characters provide them with knowledge and recognition. But while "On Desire" demonstrates the possible success of passionate education, *Mansfield Park* demonstrates its failure. I began this article with Furtak's statement that affective experience provides a knowledge only available through our emotions. This twenty-first century statement is possible because it is at the receiving end of 300 years of literary exploration of the passions. Locke, Behn, and Austen all demonstrate that we need passions to know. All three describe the necessity of a passionate education.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Bibliography

Armstrong, Nancy; Tennenhouse, Leonard (2006). "A Mind for Passion: Locke and Hutcheson on Desire". Kahn, Victoria; Saccamano, Neil; Coli, Daniela (eds), *Politics and the Passions, 1500-1850*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 131-50. DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400827152.131.

Austen, Jane [1814] (2003). *Mansfield Park*. Edited by Kathryn Sutherland. New York: Penguin.

Behn, Aphra [1689] (1992). "On Desire: A Pindarick". *Poetry*. Vol. 2 of *The Works of Aphra Behn*. Edited by Janet Todd. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 281-4. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/oseo/instance.00212585.

Burden, Judith (2002). "*Mansfield Park* and the Question of Irony". *Persuasions: Journal of the Jane Austen Society of North America*, 23, 197-204.

Butler, Marilyn (1975). *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*. Oxford: Clarendon. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198129684.003.0001.

Congreve, William (1706). *A Discourse on the Pindarique Ode in Lyriktheorie*. URL https://www.uni-due.de/lyriktheorie/texte/1706_congreve.html (2019-02-26).

De Rose, Peter L. (1983). "Imagination in *Northanger Abbey*". *University of Mississippi Studies in English*, 4, 62-76.

Drury, Joseph (2008-09). "Haywood's Thinking Machines". *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 21(2), 201-28. DOI https://doi.org/10.3138/ecf.21.2.201.

Eddleman, Stephanie M. (2008). "'If our Right Hand Offends You…': Anger and the Principle of Moral Regeneration in *Mansfield Park*". *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal On-Line*, 29. URL https://login.ezproxy.stockton.edu/login?URL=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.stockton.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2009581035&site=ehost-live (2019-02-26).

Elster, Jon (1999). *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139173308.

Erwin, Jacqueline M. (1995). "Lady Bertram, Mrs. Norris and Mrs. Price: Place and Identity on *Mansfield Park*". *Persuasions: Journal of the Jane Austen Society of North America*, 17, 144-51.

Furtak, Rick Anthony (2018). *Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190492045.001.0001.

Gardiner, Judith Kegan (1993). "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Utopian Longings in Behn's Lyric Poetry". Hutner, Heidi (ed.), *Rereading Aphra Behn*. Charlottesville (VA): University Press of Virginia, 273-300.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Grandi, Roberta (2008). “The Passion Translated: Literary and Cinematic Rhetoric in Pride and Prejudice (2005)”. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 36(1), 45-51.

Gross, Daniel M. (2006). *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle’s “Rhetoric” to Modern Brain Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226309934.001.0001.

Halsey, Katie (2005). “Spectral Texts in *Mansfield Park*”. Batchelor, Jennie; Kaplan, Cora (eds), *British Women’s Writing in the Long Eighteenth Century: Authorship, Politics, and History*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 48-61. DOI https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230595972_4.

James, Susan (1997). *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.1093/0198250134.001.0001.

Johnson, Claudia L. (1988). *Jane Austen: Women Politics and the Novel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kramnick, Jonathan (2010). *Actions and Objects from Hobbes to Richardson*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.

Loar, Christopher F. (2015). “Exclusion and Desecration: Aphra Behn, Liberalism, and Pindaric Ode”. *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700*, 39(1-2), 125-36. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/rst.2015.0001.

Locke, John [1689] (1824). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Vol. 1 of *The Works of John Locke in Nine Volumes*. London: Rivington. URL http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/761 (2019-02-26).

Markley, Robert; Rothenberg, Molly (1993). “Contestations of Nature: Aphra Behn’s ‘The Golden Age’ and the Sexualizing of Politics”. Hutner, Heide (ed.), *Rereading Aphra Behn*. Charlottesville (VA): University Press of Virginia, 301-21.

Martin, Claudia J. (2008). “Austen’s Assimilation of Lockean Ideals: The Appeal of Pursuing Happiness”. *Persuasions: Austen Journal Online*, 28. URL https://login.ezproxy.stockton.edu/login?URL=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.stockton.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mzh&AN=2008581104&site=ehost-live (2019-02-26).

Munns, Jessica (2006). “Pastoral and Lyric: Astrea in Arcadia”. Hughes, Derek; Todd, Janet (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 46-67. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521820197.013.

Nagle, Christopher (2005). “The Epistolary Passions of Sympathy: Feeling Letters in Persuasion and Burney’s *The Wanderer*”. *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*, 27, 88-98.

Raw, Laurence; Dryden, Robert G. (2013). *Global Jane Austen: Pleasure, Passion, and Possessiveness in the Jane Austen Community*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillian. DOI https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137270764.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Revard, Stella P. (1997). “Katherine Phillips, Aphra Behn, and the Female Pindaric”. Summers, Claude J.; Pebworth, Ted-Larry (eds), *Representing Women in Renaissance England*. Columbia (MO): University of Missouri Press, 27-41.

Revard, Stella P. (2009). *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode: 1450-1700*. Tempe (AZ): Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Rorty, Amelie Oksenberg (1982). “From Passions to Emotions to Sentiments”. *Philosophy*, 57, 159-72. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/s0031819100050749.

Said, Edward (1993). *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Knopf.

Sandock, Mollie (1988). “Jane Austen and the Political Passions”. *Persuasions: Journal of the Jane Austen Society of North America*, 10, 83-9.

Scodel, Joshua (2001). “The Cowleyan Pindaric Ode and Sublime Diversions”. Houston, Alan; Pincus, Steve (eds), *A Nation Transformed: England After the Restoration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 180-210.

Sodano, Joel P. (2017). “Uneasy Passions: *The Spectator*’s Divergent Interpretations of Locke’s Theory of Emotion”. *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 58(4), 449-67. DOI https://doi.org/10.1353/ecy.2017.0036.

Spencer, Jane (1986). *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen*. New York: Blackwell.

Star, Summer J. (2008). “Mad as the Devil but Smiling Sweetly: Repressed Female Anger in *Mansfield Park*”. *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*, 28, 41-51.

Thompson, Helen (2005). *Ingenuous Subjection: Compliance and Power in the Eighteenth-Century Domestic Novel*. Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press. DOI https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812203776.

Tierney-Hynes, Rebecca (2012). *Novel Minds: Philosophers and Romance Readers, 1680-1740*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. DOI https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137033291.

Todd, Janet (1996). *Aphra Behn*: *A Secret Life*. London: Fentum.

Todd, Janet (2012). “‘I do Not See How It Can Ever Be Ascertained’: Aphra Behn and Jane Austen”. *Women’s Writing*, 19(2), 192-203. DOI https://doi.org/10.1080/09699082.2011.646863.

Trigg, Stephanie (2015). “Faces That Speak: A Little Emotion Machine in in the Novels of Jane Austen”. Broomall, Susan (ed.), *Spaces for Feeling: Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain, 1650-1850*. London: Routledge, 185-201.

Zook, Melinda S. (2006). “The Political Poetry and Aphra Behn”. Hughes, Derek; Todd, Janet (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Aphra Behn*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 46-67. DOI https://doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521820197.004.

English Literature
Vol. 5 – December 2018

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

The Literature of Fear in Britain
Coleridge's *Fears in Solitude* and the French Invasion of Fishguard in 1797

Ildiko Csengei
(University of Huddersfield, UK)

Abstract This essay reads Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1798 poem, *Fears in Solitude*, in the context of the letters, memoirs, pamphlets, prints and caricatures that were produced in Britain during the 1797-98 French invasion scare. The essay will explore the ways in which these written and visual products attempted to evoke, express and even suppress feelings of fear, anxiety and terror and aims to understand Coleridge's 'fears' in the context of these feelings. In particular, the essay will examine how Coleridge's poem responds to the heightened alertness following the Fishguard landing in February 1797. In *Fears in Solitude*, Coleridge is deeply ambivalent about his stance towards his own country and his attitude towards the French. Reviewers and scholars have long been debating the poem's pro- or anti-war stance, and whether or not it is part of a contemporary alarmist discourse. Many broadsides, handbills and pamphlets published during this period warned about the horrors of a possible French invasion. They were funded by royalist associations with the sole aim of propagating fear across the nation. While these publications contributed to a widespread discourse of alarm, others, especially the visual culture of the period, challenged and ridiculed such fearmongering. Military and naval accounts and other first-hand narratives gave voice to the feelings pervading this time of psychological warfare, and explored the extent to which the horrors of war did come home intimately to affect the individual body and mind during this time. Read in the context of such contemporary texts, Coleridge's poem emerges as an artistic discourse designed reflectively to manage his own and the nation's fears instead of perpetuating the feeling itself.

Keywords Coleridge. Fishguard. Fear. War. Invasion. Propaganda. 1790s. Politics. Feeling.

1 Fishguard and the French Invasion Scare

This essay offers a reading of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, *Fears in Solitude, Written April 1798, During the Alarm of an Invasion*, in the context of a variety of publications (including personal accounts, pamphlets, broadsides, caricatures and propaganda writings) that were produced in Britain during the French invasion scare in 1797-98. The essay will explore the ways in which these written and visual products attempted to

DOI 10.30687/EL/2420-823X/2018/05/011
Submitted: 2018-11-18 | Accepted: 2018-12-06

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

evoke, express and even transform feelings of fear and panic and understand Coleridge's 'fears' in the context of these feelings. Many broadsides, handbills and pamphlets published during this period warned about the horrors of a possible French invasion. While these publications contributed to a widespread discourse of alarm, others challenged and ridiculed such fearmongering. This article will argue that when read in the context of such contemporary narratives, Coleridge's poem emerges as an artistic discourse designed reflectively to manage the nation's fears instead of further perpetuating these feelings. I will propose that Coleridge in this poem encourages his reader to embrace a more productive and self-reflective form of fear. This fear forces one to confront one's individual ethical stand in order to influence and re-shape the body politic, and thus pre-empt the national catastrophe embodied in the poem by a successful French invasion.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Fears in Solitude* was composed in Nether Stowey, Somerset, in April 1798 during 'the alarm of an invasion'. It was written in the aftermath of the French landing at Fishguard in February 1797, which was followed by a heightened nationwide preparedness for another invasion in the West Country. The period of 1796-1805 is known in Britain as the Great Terror. The plan to invade Britain goes back to 1796, when Lazare Hoche, Napoleon's most formidable rival at the time, organised an expedition to Ireland with the purpose of using the Irish unrest and hostility to the British crown to his advantage (Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 31). The stormy weather, however, dispersed the French ships before they could have landed. Hoche gave the command of the second invasion force to the American William Tate, an elderly man of Irish origin, who had previously fought in the American war of Independence. A substantial portion of Tate's 1400-strong army were ex-convicts, who had been released from gaol specifically for this attack and were therefore inexperienced in military affairs. Convicts were bound to be unruly and were disposable, and, if captured, would have had to be kept at the expense of the British government – which, as some speculated at the time, could have been Hoche's intention. As one commentator jokingly observed: "The English send their convicts to New South Wales, the French land theirs in old South Wales" ("The Invasion of England", 1860).[1]

Hoche's method was psychological: to "spread the panic as generally as possible". As he writes in his instructions to Tate:

> and the troops being supplied with combustible matter, Col. Tate is to advance rapidly in the dark, on that side of Bristol which may be to windward, and immediately to set fire to that quarter. If the enterprize to be conducted with dexterity, it cannot fail to produce the total ruin of

1 "The Invasion of England in 1797. By a Native" (1860). *Saturday Evening Post*, 11 Feb.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> the town, the port, the docks, and the vessels, and *to strike terror and amazement into the very heart of the capital of England*. (Hoche quoted in Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 54; emphasis added)

By Hoche's orders, Tate's troops were to take on shore minimum supplies only to last for four days: "Your soldiers are to carry with them nothing but their arms, ammunition, and bread: they will find everywhere clothes, linen and shoes; the inhabitants must supply their wants, and the seats of the gentry are to be your magazines" (Hoche quoted in Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 58). The purpose of the expedition was manifold. Firstly, they aimed to create an insurrection amongst the poor by planning to distribute money and drink and agitating against the government. Another aim was to create a distraction and thus to interrupt commerce and enable a larger invasion (*The Fishguard Invasion* 1892, 36; Baker 1797, 6.). Accordingly, Hoche ordered that "all impositions should be laid on peers, the men of rank and high fortune, the clergy, those who serve as officers in the army and navy, and especially in the militia" (*Annual Register* 39, 1797, quoted by Horn 1980, 3). Hoche's assumption was that he would be able to rely on the support of the poor and turn their discontent against the wealthy by organising a form of guerrilla warfare once in Britain and then enabling them to form a republican government. Tate's troops were therefore under strict orders never to pillage cottages but were encouraged to destroy the property of the rich (Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 52).

Tate's expedition, however, did not go according to plan. As Commodore Castagnier notes in his journal, the landing in the Bristol Channel had to be abandoned due to unfavourable tidal conditions. Instead, they decided to head for their second choice for landing, Cardigan Bay on the Welsh coast (Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 59-60). The enemy ships were spotted by the magistrate of the county of Pembroke, Thomas Williams, near Saint David's Head on 22 February 1797. Williams instantly sent a warning to Fishguard Fort (*An Authentic Account* 1842, 5; Bullen 1997, 9). A sense of panic and confusion followed rapidly amongst the locals:

> Soon the news spread over the surrounding countryside and many farmers and cottagers, in panic, began to gather together such as livestock, implements and personal belongings as they could muster to move them inland towards Haverfordwest. The dread of the French in those days was so great that it 'amounted almost to black despair'. (Horn 1980, 5)

Many first-hand accounts of the invasion similarly testify that "there was no mistaking an invading foe; and thus every other passion thus became swallowed up in fear" on first spotting the enemy (Baker 1797, 1).

The vicar Daniel Rowlands, who claimed to have witnessed the landing when he was fifteen years old, accounts for "a very real fear":

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> I will not deny now, after the lapse of so many years, that my heart at this moment beat unpleasantly fast. I had already watched the landing of some of the French troops, but from a considerable distance, and there had been something unreal about the scene, something like to play-acting, or a dream; but now that I actually heard their voices, the effect was very different. They were really here, close by; there was no mistake about it. I had an almost overwhelming desire to take to my heels and run for it. (*The Fishguard Invasion* 1892, 67-8)

Another account emphasises how newspapers initially reinforced such feelings, by one paper mentioning

> the terror and alarm into which the metropolis had been thrown by news just arrived, that a number of French frigates had appeared off the coast of South Wales, and succeeded in landing there a large body of troops. ("The Invasion of England" 1860)

Fishguard is a small and remote town, which many at the time considered an unlikely place for a major military event. Its small fort was ill-supplied with ammunition and unsuitable for fending off a more serious invasion. Unaware of the state of the town's defences, however, when the French heard shots fired from the fort, they immediately set sail out of Fishguard bay to land nearby at Carreg Wastad point (Baker 1797, 2). This is a remote foreland with rugged cliffs, which made landing particularly difficult. One of their boats capsized during the landing, and the hilly landscape made it hard to push barrels of gunpowder on shore. Also, Pembroke was at the time an area where large-scale smuggling took place (Bullen 1997). As the French soldiers discovered large quantities of alcohol, order and discipline rapidly degenerated into a state of drunkenness and chaos (Horn 1980, 7). The invasion attempt was fended off quickly by the local militia and volunteer forces: the Fishguard Fencibles, the Castlemartin Yeomanry Cavalry and the Cardiganshire Militia organised under the command of a local landowner, Lord Cawdor. Their numbers only amounted to a few hundred, including groups of local volunteers who joined the defence with improvised weapons. The *Annual Register* noted that "not one of these men had ever fired a musket, except for amusement, yet they proceeded against the enemy with the most cheerful alacrity" (quoted in Horn 1980, 8). Still, Tate's troops quickly realised that the local support that they had expected did not materialise. Discipline amongst the French broke down; and, believing they were outnumbered by the British, once their ships sailed off and a retreat was therefore made impossible, they unconditionally surrendered on Goodwick Sands on 24 February.

The invasion threat in the 1790s was complicated by divided political sentiments at home. Following the French Revolution, the conservative

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

British government's fears or treason, conspiracy and Jacobinism led to a climate of heightened surveillance and repressive measures. The execution of Louis XVI in 1793 was an evident wake-up call to royalists in Britain. In light of emerging republicanism at home, some feared the possibility of a similar fate for George III. In consequence, William Pitt's government curtailed civil liberties, resulting in the suspension of Habeas Corpus, the treason trials and the Two Acts of 1795. The invasion threat raised the question of whether the government could trust the loyalty of its own subjects in resisting the French. Opposition to the war was strong in radical circles. Many, including William Frend and Joseph Gerrard, emphasised the economic devastation that war was threatening to bring. And motivating the labouring poor to leave their home and family and to voluntarily sacrifice their lives in the service of the government's war effort also proved to be hard.[2]

The loyalist answer to the challenges posed by the divided sentiments coupled with a foreign invasion threat was a large propaganda effort. There was an outpouring of broadsides, pamphlets, caricatures, prints, popular songs and other ephemera between 1797 and 1805 responding to the possibility of an invasion (Philp 2006, 2, 126). Most of this material was sponsored by the government or loyalist associations, often – especially in the 1803-05 period – with the aim of mobilising the poor against the French. In 1797-1798 the government was somewhat reluctant to call for volunteers, fearing an armed nation that would be equipped to turn against the establishment (Philp 2006, 6). The majority of these publications were dominated by an alarmist discourse, aiming for the perpetuation of fear amongst the masses. Those published in 1797-1798 were often aimed to warn against factions within the political elite and against those who sought to agitate for reform. The discourse of pamphlets, broadsides and other propaganda material circulating across the nation was quite distinctive with recurring tropes and an imagery or horror and merciless violence. They depicted the French as savages who would murder, rape and pillage if allowed entry into the country. In 1798, for instance, the Bishop of Llandaff worried that "Great Britain will be made an appendage to continental Despotism" and warned that:

> They everywhere promise protection to the poorer sort, and they every where strip the poorest of every thing they possess; they plunder their cottages, and they set them on fire when the plunder is exhausted; they torture the owners to discover their wealth, and they put them to death when they

2 See William Frend's appendix to *Peace and Union*, "The Effect of War on the Poor", which was published days after hostilities began in February 1793. Joseph Gerrald also emphasised the economic devastation that war was threatening to bring in "A Convention the Only Means of Saving us from Ruin" (1793).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> have none to discover; they violate females of all ages; they insult the hoary head, and trample on all the decencies of life. (Watson 1798, 8)[3]

Whilst during the 1790s the government's paranoia focused on possible internal enemies, during the second period of invasion scare, 1803-05, the focus was on the external threat associated mainly with the person of Napoleon as a national enemy. The period 1803-05 saw the most sustained threat of a French invasion, where Napoleon's 80,000-strong army was camped along the Channel with additional reinforcement further inland. A large flotilla of barges and boats was constructed at this time with the intention of transporting troops across to England (Philp 2006, 1). Several 1803 loyalist prints presented a choice between 'freedom and slavery' and exhorted that 'Britons never will be slaves' to Napoleon – pictured by many sources as mad, blinded by ambition, a heartless murderer even of his own sick soldiers, and the slaver of Europe.[4] A broadside titled "The Fate of Labouring Men, and the Poor, in Case of Invasion" (1803) warned that:

> The stouter, and the more inured to Labour any working Man is, the better Price will he fetch in the Slave-Market. A rich Man, who cannot handle a Spade of a Pick-axe, who cannot wheel a Barrow, or stand the Furnace of the Melting-house, will only be fit to be killed; but the able-bodied Labourer will be sold for a Slave. (1803, 71)

A gruesome depiction of atrocities committed by the French was common in these publications. This patriotic broadside published around 1803 depicts episodes of rape in order to emphasise French monstrosity in relation to the 1797 Fishguard event:

> These wretches are accustomed, whenever they prevail to subject the women to the most brutal violence, which they perpetrate with an insulting ferocity of which the wildest savages would be incapable. To

3 The prints, political cartoons, caricatures and broadsides cited in this article as 'Curzon' are from the Bodleian Library's Curzon collection. This collection comprises the extra-illustrated volumes of A.M. Broadley's *Napoleon in Caricature* (1911), J.H. Rose's *The Life of Napoleon* (1901) and Lord Rosebery's *Napoleon: The Last Phase* (1900). Broadley was a collector of Napoleonic materials, who 'grangerised' these books into a 28 volume folio. 'Grangerisation' was the practice of extra-illustrating books with original documents and prints. The *Times Literary Supplement* from 19 September 1918 considers it debatable whether "the Grangerizer is a benefactor or a vandal of the deepest dye". See the introductory pages of Broadley and Daniell (Curzon d.25). I am grateful to the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, for permission to reproduce material and digital images from the Curzon collection.

4 For instance, "Freedom or Slavery: A New Song" (1803); Fitzgerald, "Britons never will be Slaves: An Address to Every Loyal Briton on the Threatened Invasion of his Country" (1803); "The Fate of Labouring Men, and the Poor, in Case of Invasion" (1803).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> gratify their furious passions is not however their chief object in these atrocities. Their principal delight is to shock the feelings of fathers and brothers, and husbands! Will you, my Countrymen, which you can draw a trigger, or handle a pike, suffer your daughters, your sisters, and wives, to fall into the power of such monsters? […] Two Officers went to a house, in which was a woman in child-bed, attended by her mother, who was upwards of Seventy Years old. The French brutes tied the husband with cords, and in his presence, defiled both the wife and the mother!!! (Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 76)[5]

The alarmist broadside "Horrors upon horrors" (1803) (fig. 1) uses a personal account to fuel the nation's fears, narrating how a Hanoverian blacksmith witnessed the horrific cruelties of the French soldiers. It proposes a "true and faithful Narrative of the Sufferings of a Hanoverian Blacksmith, who died raving Mad, in consequence of the dreadful Scenes of Barbarity, of which he had been of late an Eye-witness" [Curzon b.10(46)]. "An Invasion Sketch" (1803) depicts a national catastrophe, where Napoleon has successfully occupied London and rewards his troops by allowing them to pillage the city for three days:

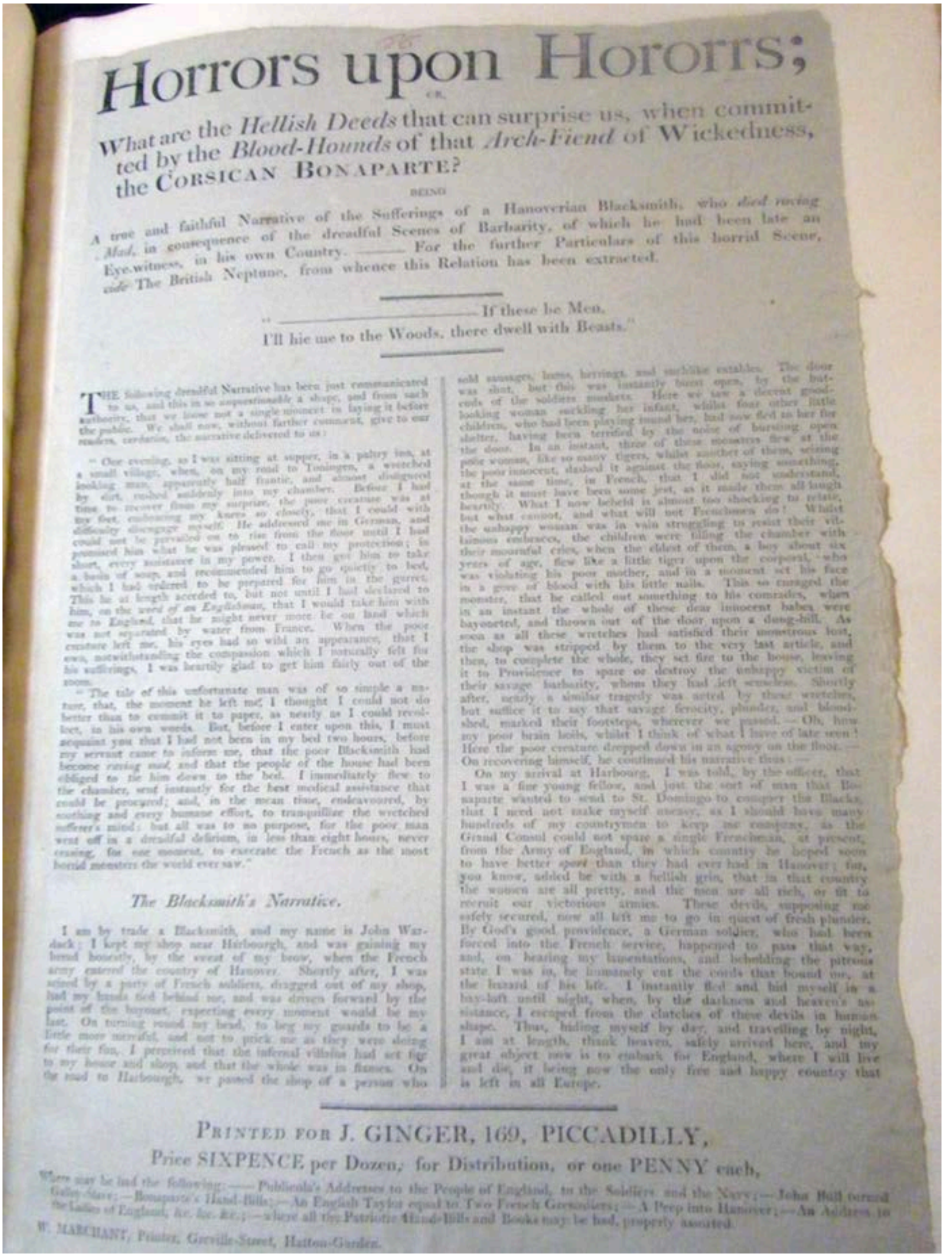
> Churches broken open, and the church plate plundered – The pews and altars converted into stabling – Four Bishops murdered, who had taken refuge in Westminster Abbey – The screams of women and of children mix with the cries of the soldiers – Vive la Republique! Vive Bonaparte! [Curzon b.10(66)]

In the end, important political and military figures, including Pitt and Lord Nelson are tried by a military tribunal and shot in Hyde Park. Britain is compared to a second Carthage and London's name is changed to "Buonapart-opolis" ("An Invasion Sketch" 1803, 66).

The visual culture of the invasion period, however, demonstrates a resistance to the government's effort by making panic-mongering the object of satire. The *London Chronicle* of 2 January 1798 printed a report by an English sailor, recently returned from Brest, who claimed to have seen "astonishing preparations", including the progress of "one of those immense rafts projected by Citizen Monge" (8). Several sketches followed, attempting to depict what these machines could have looked like, including rafts powered by windmills and watermills (see fig. 2, "A view of the French raft, as

5 *The Saturday Evening Post*'s account from 1860 mentions similar instances of cruelty in relation to Fishguard, but it also cites empowering accounts of the locals standing up to the French. It also depicts the French as 'panic-stricken' when they march to surrender.

English Literature, 5, 2018, 183-206
e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635



Horrors upon Hororrs;

OR,

What are the *Hellish Deeds* that can surprise us, when committed by the *Blood-Hounds* of that *Arch-Fiend* of Wickedness, the CORSICAN BONAPARTE?

BEING

A true and faithful Narrative of the Sufferings of a Hanoverian Blacksmith, who *died raving Mad*, in consequence of the dreadful Scenes of Barbarity, of which he had been late an Eye-witness, in his own Country. —— For the further Particulars of this horrid Scene, *vide* The British Neptune, from whence this Relation has been extracted.

"—————— If these be Men,
I'll hie me to the Woods, there dwell with Beasts."

The Blacksmith's Narrative.

PRINTED FOR J. GINGER, 169, PICCADILLY,
Price SIXPENCE per Dozen, for Distribution, or one PENNY each,

W. MARCHANT, Printer, Greville-Street, Hatton-Garden.

Figure 1. "Horrors Upon Hororrs [*sic*], or What are the Hellish Deeds that can surprise us, when committed by the Black-Hounds of the Arch-Fiend or Wickedness, The Corsican Bonaparte". London: W. Marchant. Curzon b.10(46)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635



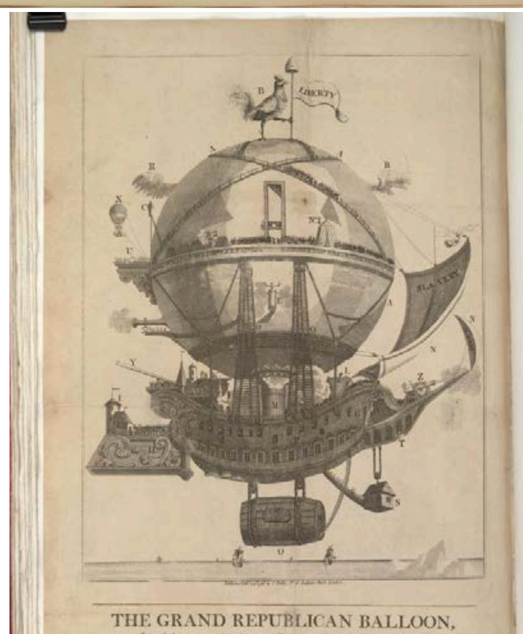


Figure 2 (up). A view of the French raft, as seen afloat at St. Maloes, in February 1798. London: John Fairburn, 13 February 1798. Curzon b.22(40)

Figure 3 (right). The grand republican balloon, intended to convey the Army of England from the Gallic shore. London: J. Wallis, 24 February 1798. Curzon b.11(40)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

seen afloat at St. Maloes, in February 1798").[6] Political cartoonists, inspired by the idea, produced various caricatures on the theme. For instance, "The Grand Republican Balloon: for the Purpose of Exchanging French Liberty! For English Happiness!" (1798) (fig. 3) even had a guillotine on board, and was big enough to carry "the Army of England" across the channel. And as some caricatures demonstrate, not everyone bought into the propagation of danger. For instance, Isaac Cruikshank's "The Budget or John Bull Frightened out of His [Money] Wits" (1796) (fig. 4) portrayed the threat as a convenient excuse for the government to raise taxes (Franklin, Philp 2003, 47).

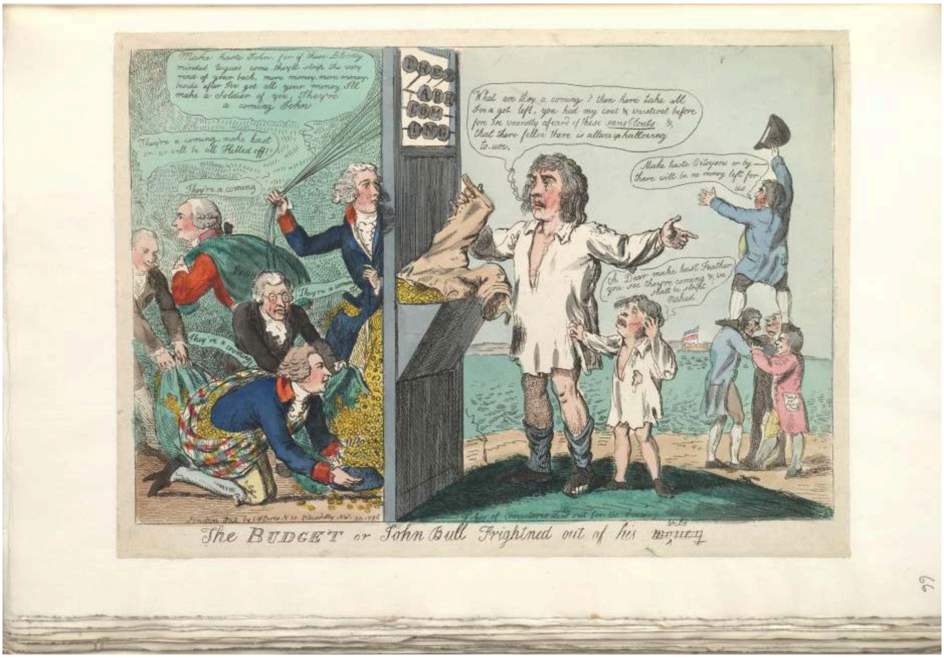
In the 1803-05 period as the threat intensified, the satirical tone countering the prevalence of fear persisted. "More Rafts – or, A new Plan for Invading England" (1803), for instance, pictures entire cavalry troops transported in huge swan-shaped machines, which were gifted to the English by the Mayor of Amiens (fig. 5). Amidst the hundreds of patriotic prints, songs and poems pouring out during this period, one can still come across material adopting a more critical or satirical tone. The broadside "Countrymen, The Whole Plot's Discover'd!!" (1803) makes fun of the invasion attempt and exposes Napoleon's power-hunger by picturing him as a megalomaniac who is even prepared to make a quixotic attempt to conquer the Moon. And the conquered British soldier should beware as a diet of soup awaits him in the French army:

> Mark what I tell ye! – the prime Youth of your Land are to be led forth to complete the Conquest of the World. That Corpulency which ye have acquired by a natural Attention to Beef and Pudding is to be hastily reduced to the sleeky Size of a Frenchman by a copious Use of thin Soup, Garlic, and Exercise. ("Countrymen" 1803, 75)

In the aftermath of Fishguard the public's fears intensified significantly. Large-scale mobilisation followed, with the roads to Wales overflowing with troops. The atmosphere of hurry and upheaval was mingled with panic blown out of proportion by gossip and misinformation. The Admiralty feared another large expedition, now against Ireland. This climate of hypervigilance led to a series of false alarms on the Welsh coast (Jones 1950, 145-8). According to *An Authentic Account*, when a number of boats were sighted again one night, the "alarm was instantly spread – drums beat to arms in all directions; and the necessity of putting all the French prisoners to death, solemnly debated" (*An Authentic Account* 1842, 35). In the end, they turned out to be coasters robbing fishing nets. Ironically, this event caused a greater alarm across the country than the actual invasion. In response to the threat,

6 Many of the Curzon collection's caricatures and political cartoons related to Napoleon and the French invasion scare are digitally available via `https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/`.

 e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635



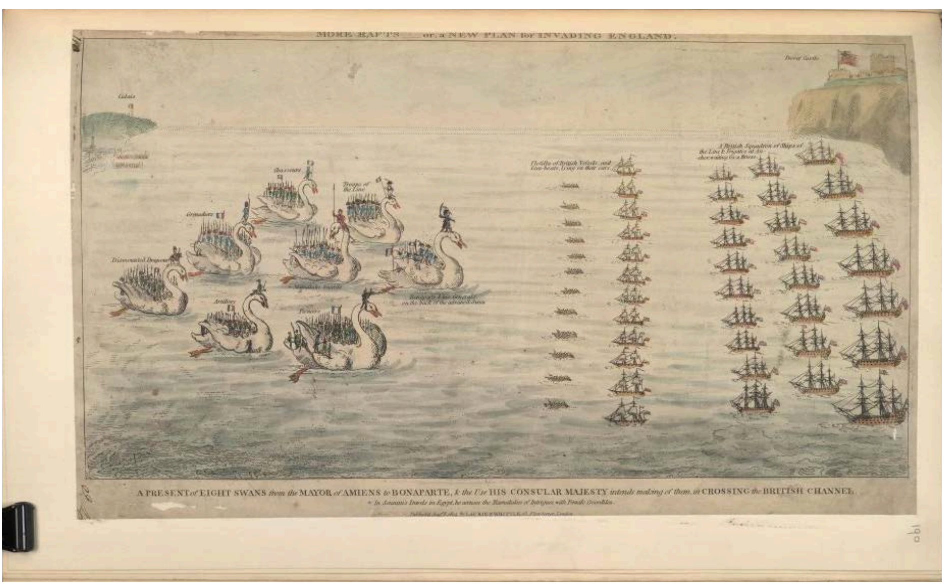


Figure 4. Isaac Cruikshank, The budget, or John Bull frightened out of his [money] wits. London: S.W. Fores, 1796. Curzon b.3(66)

Figure 5. More rafts -- or, : A new plan for invading England. A present of eight swans from the Mayor of Amiens. London: Laurie & Whittle, 8 August 1803. Curzon b.23(190)

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

the Admiralty sent Sir Captain Pellew at Plymouth to cruise in the Bristol Channel. However, the appearance of his *Indefatigable* caused the locals to believe that they were French vessels, causing yet another upheaval of panic: "It would be impossible to describe the scene of confusion and dismay which took place: women in tears, and fainting; -- the men crying, 'to arms! to arms!' […] and many hundreds of bold determined hearts had assembled in Fishguard, resolved to conquer or die" (*An Authentic Account* 1842, 36).

Fishguard is usually remembered today as a humorous shambles, with a handful of Welshmen and women triumphantly outsmarting the French and making them look ridiculous and incompetent. The event most frequently associated with the landing is the story that the French mistook local women dressed up in traditional hats and red coats for British soldiers and believed themselves to be outnumbered. One woman in particular is celebrated as a local hero: the 47-year-old cobbler Jemima Nicholas, who allegedly captured fourteen Frenchmen and held them until the return of the local defence forces to Fishguard. While the story that Lord Cawdor deliberately used the women to deceive the French is a myth, there is evidence that the French thought that they had been outnumbered and that this was an impression that Lord Cawdor had been trying to promote. The women did play an important part in defending Fishguard for a whole day, and they did gather on the hill – but not to frighten off the French but to watch them surrender. In *The Last Invasion: The Story of the French Landing in Wales*, Phil Carradice traces how the myth of the women taken for soldiers and used for bringing about a surrender emerged in contemporary and later narratives. He examines how the story changed through contemporary eyewitness accounts and later nineteenth-century accounts from the women as merely present and watching the surrender into them actively bringing about the French capitulation (Carradice 1992, 93-101). These narratives explicitly claim to be authentic – which claim is arguably questionable, and there are still speculations in the nineties as to what exactly happened at Fishguard and who, if anyone, invited the French. Sid Walters, in his self-published *'Official' Account, French Invasion, 1797* (1993) comes to the conclusion that the landing at Fishguard was a Catholic conspiracy.

It is also worthwhile to examine the transformation of emotion in this series of retrospective accounts. While most first-hand accounts of the Fishguard event mention the initial sense of fear and panic, many of them also describe how these feelings quickly gave way to other emotions and experiences. Even Lord Cawdor notes the initial chaos in his own account of the invasion: "Upon my arrival in that town [Haverfordwest] I found the inhabitants in great confusion and alarm. Many had fled and others were preparing to follow" (Cawdor quoted in Walters 1993, 98). The discussion, however, quickly moves on to highlight how he brought order back to a dire situation by accepting command of the local defence troops. In the same vein, most accounts appear to put an emphasis on how the initial sense of panic was

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

swiftly controlled by the brave locals stepping up to the task of defending the country. Instead of picturing the French as monstrous, most accounts present an image that ranges from humane to pathetic and weak. *An Authentic Account*, for instance, presents distinct episodes of individual encounter between the French and the Welsh. Owen Griffiths, who served on board a British ship that was captured by the French near Carrig Wastad point, tells his readers about how his initial fears were abated when the French captain reassured him that he would be treated as equal and made comfortable:

> Owen then asked the commodore to restore the Britannia to him; -- the commodore replied, “do you not know, that you are prisoners?” at which Owen trembled; when the commodore said, “What are you afraid of, you sir?” at the same time, he gave him some brandy to cheer up his spirits. Owen was taken to the camp that night by the general, who had his bed and pillow spread on the ground, observing, that “he had slept hundreds of nights, in that way, very comfortably;” he then lay down, and bade him sleep behind his back. (*An Authentic Account* 1842, 13)

Later they even let him go home to his family, making him promise that he would return within three hours, which he never did.

Plundering is presented as something done by a few unruly individuals rather than an overwhelming enemy. They are swiftly confronted and effectively controlled by locals, and the victims are said to receive generous government compensation for life (*An Authentic Account* 1842, 16). Instead of raping women, the French act humanely:

> a woman was brought to bed at the time of the French landing, and being too weak to be removed, remained, placing her trust in providence. A number of the French entered the house – the poor woman took up the newly born infant in her arms – the enemy endeavoured to soothe the poor woman’s fears, and left the house without further molestation. (*An Authentic Account* 1842, 25)

Rowlands presents the French capitulation as a humorous episode, where the French not only have to come to terms with their own incompetence, but are also humiliated by the local women:

> It is impossible to describe the chagrin depicted on their features when they realised how trifling (numerically speaking) was the force to which they had succumbed. Still greater was the annoyance they experienced when they discovered that the scarlet flash which had so scared them was produced—not by the red coats of a body of regulars—but by the whittles worn by a parcel of women! […] these bellicose dames and damsels gathered closely around the Frenchmen, addressing manifold observations

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> to them in their Welsh tongue, in the use of which most of them possess extraordinary fluency. […] I was close by when Madame Tate who had accompanied the troops flew at him [General Tate] like a fury. She, too, had discovered the paucity of our numbers, and that Lord Cawdor's "ten thousand men" were—in Spain perhaps—and that the English regulars were—well, very irregular forces attired in scarlet whittles. Her remarks as to the conduct of the campaign were evidently of a most uncomplimentary nature; though I cannot say I understood French, I understood that. In my heart I felt sorry for General Tate. "Look here, mum", I ventured to remark, "if you want to have it out with somebody, here's a lady of your own weight and age. Tackle Jemima." (*The Fishguard Invasion* 1892, 177-8)

In other accounts fear gets projected onto the French, revealing their insecurity and apprehension in moments of stress. In his letter to his wife dated March 1797, Lord Cawdor describes the scene when the officers leading the French invasion are taken prisoner and escorted to Carmarthen under Cawdor's supervision. Cawdor notes that Tate was "alarmed and confused" and "trembled almost to convulsions" when chaperoned through an angry mob. Captain Norris and Lieutenant St Leger were both "greatly frightened". Cawdor calls Captain Tyrell "a stupid Paddy", and Le Brun (Monsieur le Baron de Rochemure, the second in command) "as dirty as a pig, but more intelligent and better manners" (Cawdor quoted in Wheeler, Broadley [1908] 2007, 69; Horn 1980, 12). And according to *An Authentic Account*, during the capitulation, "all the officers remained at Trehowel, their head-quarters, being afraid to go with their men to the sands" (21).

2 Coleridge's Fears in *Fears in Solitude*

At the time of the composition of *Fears in Solitude* in April 1798, Coleridge lived in Nether Stowey in the West county, and in the close proximity of Wordsworth, who moved into Alfoxden in July 1797. The poem was published by the radical publisher Joseph Johnson in late 1798 as part of the quarto *Fears in Solitude, Written in 1798, During the Alarm of an Invasion. to which are Added France, an Ode; and Frost at Midnight.* Reviewers and critics have long been puzzled by the poem's ambivalence. It has been subject to debate whether *Fears in Solitude* is a pro-war or an anti-war poem, and whether or not it is part of the contemporary discourse of alarmism. Mark Rawlinson (2000, 119) is uncertain whether it is an anti-war polemic or a rather docile call to arms; Paul Magnuson suggests that the ambivalence found in the 1798 collection is understandable in a climate where the pressure on those perceived as Jacobin had intensified: "Coleridge's allegiance to the domestic space – personal and national – seems in this pamphlet to leave itself open to interpretation as a Burkean patriotism",

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

leaving the collection "deliberately open both to radical and conservative implications" (1998, 67, 70). I believe that understanding the poem's ambivalence goes hand in hand with unpacking Coleridge's response to contemporary articulations of – primarily political – fear.

The immediate context for writing *Fears in Solitude* was the climate of intensifying government anxieties regarding a possible new invasion attempt in 1798. This was brought on by the arrest, by Pitt's government, of John Binns of the London Corresponding Society and two United Irishmen, the Rev. James Coigley and Arthur O'Connor, on 1 March 1798. They found a letter on Coigley, addressed to the French Directory, proposing to conspire in a French invasion of Ireland. They were acquitted of treason, but Binns was sent to prison until Pitt's fall in 1801. In the wake of these arrests, the government increased pressure on suspected French sympathisers, which led to the suspension of Habeas Corpus (Coleridge 1978, 1: lxxvii).[7] Due to his radical sympathies, Coleridge did not escape the scrutiny of an increasingly repressive establishment. Between 1793 and 1795, both Coleridge and Wordsworth were aligned with mainstream Painite opposition to war (Roe 1988, 126). During the 1790s Coleridge built up a reputation as a radical in the West country, based on his lectures in Bristol in 1795, the *Watchman* of 1796, and the poems and essays that he contributed to the *Morning Post* toward the end of 1797. The home office even sent a spy, James Walsh (nicknamed "Spy Nozy" by Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria*) to watch Wordsworth's and Coleridge's allegedly suspicious activities, which involved night-time walks and profuse note-taking in a part of the country that was deemed close enough to Ilfracombe, where the French ships were first sighted in 1797 (Roe 1988, 249 ff.). In the climate of increasing vigilance in the wake of Fishguard, the government's overreaction is perhaps less surprising. In the spring of 1798 the French invasion was considered imminent by both parties, and both Houses unanimously approved of embodying the cavalry and militia against those who were seen as "disaffected" (Coleridge 1978, 1: lxxxii). Thus, Magnuson argues, the patriotic tone of *Fears* and *France: an Ode* can be understood as a public declaration of Coleridge's shift from radicalism to patriotism in the face of harsh government repression (1989, 200).

Despite the ostensible ambivalence of *Fears in Solitude*, Coleridge's harsh critique of sensationalist writing might offer a clue to his attitude to fear-generating discourses, even perhaps in a political setting. In his review of Lewis's *The Monk* he writes:

> Situations of torment, and images of naked horror, are easily conceived;

7 Coleridge had been following Binns's activities from the beginning. *The Watchman* 4, 127 (Friday, March 25, 1796) gives account of Binns's first near-arrest for holding a meeting in Birmingham.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

> and a writer in whose works they abound, deserves our gratitude almost equally with him who should drag us by way of sport through a military hospital, or force us to sit at the dissecting-table of a natural philosopher. […] Figures that shock the imagination, and narratives that mangle the feelings, rarely discover genius, and always betray a low and vulgar taste. (Coleridge 1797, 195)

Moreover, Coleridge clearly maintained his opposition to the war until early 1798 (Roe 1988, 239). Hazlitt recollects Coleridge give an anti-war sermon on Sunday 14 January that year at Shrewsbury. To "shew the fatal effects of war", Coleridge

> drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock [and…] the same poor country-lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an alehouse, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum, a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood. (Hazlitt 1930-34, 108)

But the news of the French invasion of the Swiss cantons, which reached London on 19 March, was seen by many as a betrayal of the Revolution's ideals by a rapidly expanding military imperialism (Roe 1986, 146). Coleridge's response was the publication of "Recantation: An Ode" in the *Morning Post* on 16 April 1798, which demonstrated a marked change of attitude towards the French Revolution. In *Fears in Solitude*, Coleridge expresses his disillusionment together with a simultaneous critique of the politics driving his own country, allowing both issues to surface in the poem and contributing to its much-debated ambivalence.

Coleridge's walks in the countryside, and his peaceful enjoyment of the landscape in a quiet dell on Quantock Hills at the beginning of the poem, are a response to the political turbulence of 1797-98. For Coleridge, this was a time of withdrawal from the public sphere, and an act of taking refuge in the remote quietness of Nether Stowey following his active and radical Bristol years. Coleridge hoped that the healing quality of the landscape would help manage his painful emotions and cultivate positive sentiments. As he writes to his brother, the Rev. George Coleridge, on 10 March 1798:

> I love fields & woods & mounta[ins] with almost a visionary fondness – and because I have found benevolence & quietness growing within me as that fondness [has] increased, therefore I should wish to be the means of implanting it in others - & to destroy the bad passions not by combating them, but by keeping them in inaction.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

He continues by quoting Wordsworth:

> […] for the Man
> Once taught to love such objects, as excite
> No morbid passions, no disquietude,
> No vengeance & no hatred, needs must feel
> The Joy of that pure principle of Love
> So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
> Less pure & exquisite, he cannot chuse
> But seek for objects of a kindred Love
> In fellow-natures, & a kindred Joy.
> (*The Collected Letters*, 1: 397-8)

By being immersed in the landscape, Coleridge proposes not to fight bad feelings; instead, he tries not to give them attention. He believes that natural scenery helps develop other-regarding feelings in the individual, who then enables the transmission of such positive emotions to others. This wish to be the instrument of spreading benevolence instead of negative emotion is, I believe, a key component of his poem's emotional dynamic.

On the surface, however, other-regarding feeling and peaceful withdrawal is far from what materialises in *Fears in Solitude*. Coleridge's troubling thoughts about the possibility of an invasion do not leave him in peace, intruding instead into the poet's inner world. After the idyllic start, the poem takes a darker turn:

> It is indeed a melancholy thing,
> And weighs upon the heart, that he must think
> What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
> This way or that way o'er these silent hills --
> Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
> And all the crash of onset; fear and rage
> And undetermin'd conflict.
> (Coleridge 2001b, 595-603; ll. 33-9)[8]

The fantasy of a haunting scenario of invasion becomes a psychological threat: the invasion of the mind by an idea. And instead of being a healing force, the landscape also inadvertently contributes to this mental invasion. Coleridge cannot help but notice the "sunny beam" on the "long-ivied beacon" (207-8) – an element of coastal defence built in response to the heightened French invasion scare following Fishguard.

8 All subsequent citations of this poem are from this volume and will be referenced by line numbers in brackets.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

The poem's argument is that the imminent invasion – the one that contemporaries unanimously predicted in 1798 – is the result of (and due punishment for) the nation's own sins and wrongdoings. These include political and religious corruption, the enslavement of other nations, lack of compassion, as well as ruthless warmongering far from home. When waging war at a distance, Coleridge suggests, the sacrifices of the individual remain invisible, looking "As if the soldier died without a wound; | As if the fibres of this godlike frame | Were gor'd without a pang" (118-20). Mary A. Favret argues that the immediate activity of the first major European war remained outside the visual experience of the English public as newspaper reports, songs and poems functioned as a "paper shield" against the "destructive violence of war" (1994, 539). Favret makes use of Elaine Scarry's theory outlined in her book titled *The Body in Pain*. Scarry argues that the "reciprocal injuring" that constitutes war often remains invisible in its representations (1985, 63). The wounding, pain and death suffered by actual human bodies are either missing altogether from war writing or are carefully mediated and transformed by the rhetorical devices of the text. Coleridge's anti-war argument here is similar: when we fight a war at a distance, we become detached from its cruelty. War becomes a form of entertainment or a field of study with its own technical vocabulary when "Boys and girls, | And women, that would groan to see a child | Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war, | The best amusement for our morning meal!" (105-8). When fratricide is routinely expressed through euphemisms, "mere abstractions" and "empty sounds" (116), we have lost touch with all other-regarding feeling that could do justice to the realities of war. The government encourages a form of patriotic enthusiasm for the war effort, which fails to consider the horrific experiences of individuals on the battlefield and the ripple effect of such trauma on their relatives at home. And, as Coleridge implies, we, as individuals – including women and children at home – play along and lose our capacity for sympathy along the way.

But Coleridge's poem has another side to it, which appears to contradict this anti-war sentiment. The poem depicts Coleridge's struggles with being afraid when alone – afraid of the productions of his own mind. It articulates the process of the poet evoking and then controlling fears of the destruction of his country. The horrors that he dreams up carry echoes of contemporary alarmist publications. He depicts a vision of English women and children fleeing their home and becoming refugees; and his appeal to a patriotic masculinity mirrors the tone of many contemporary bellicose songs and propaganda literature in the following passage:

> O let not English women drag their flight
> Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
> Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Laugh'd at the breast! […]
Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
That laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder; and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
[…]
Stand we forth;
Render them back upon th' insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on it's [sic] waves,
As the vile sea-weeds, which some mountain blast
Swept from our shores! And O! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs, with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy!
(132-54)

In his essay "Alarmism, Public-Sphere Performatives, and the Lyric Turn", Mark Jones argues that Coleridge, rather than being alarmist himself, suggests that the real enemy are fear and paranoia, and not the French. The view of the French as monstrous and dehumanised is the product of the scaremongering imagination of British alarmist propaganda. Jones maintains that, for Coleridge, the real threat to liberty in the 1790s was caused by the government's own fear and subsequent acts of persecution. And what perpetuated this threat was the way in which such negative sentiments were transmitted and intensified in the public sphere. Through the medium of contemporary publications, William Pitt's 'Reign of Terror' recreated, and mirrored even, the very terror that it meant to oppose (Jones 2003, 85).

Yet reading Coleridge's poem in the context of the Fishguard narratives allows us to complement previous interpretations. While the poem is evidently aware of alarmist writing, it is more in line with those narrative and visual attempts that challenge such transmission of panic. In this essay a variety of publications have been considered, all of which use fear, but in different ways. Alarmist publications compel their audience to feel it, to get caught up in it, take sides and ultimately to support the war effort. The Fishguard narratives want their reader to see how fear can be controlled, transformed, laughed at and observed in the one whom we fear. Coleridge depicts fear by first picturing it as an idea that presents itself during the poet's meditations, rather than an immediate, felt experience. The object of these fears is something indefinite. The "uproar" and "strife" of the invasion "*may* now be stirring | *This way or that way*" (35-6), while the hills themselves remain "silent" (36). The invasion in the poem is not imminent, but a possibility of "fear and rage | And *undetermined* conflict" occurring

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

to the poet on reflection (38-9; emphases added). Whose fear and rage it is remains unclear: the feelings stand there as abstractions. The poem articulates the process of Coleridge evoking and then controlling fears of the destruction of his country. His overwhelming fantasies are resolved by breaking out of his solitude at the end of the poem. The sight of his village and Tom Poole's house rescue Coleridge from the nightmare of his own mental productions. "Society" gives his mind "a livelier impulse", a "dance of thought" (219, 221). But even this does not completely eliminate the oscillation of his desire between society and solitude that haunts the poem's framework, which oscillation also hints at his looming marital unhappiness and adds a personal level to the poem's politically charged ambivalence.

In conclusion, I would like to propose that Coleridge talks about two different kinds of fear in the poem. On the one hand, the fear of a monstrous enemy pictured by propaganda publications, by which the government and loyalist societies attempted to manipulate the population into feeling and acting the way the authorities desired. Coleridge finds a strategy to cope with these terrors by encouraging his reader to feel and embrace a different, more productive kind of fear. He urges his countrymen to return from the victory with "fear" and "not with a drunken triumph" (152) – a pre-emptive fear of one's individual vices and of the disastrous and widespread consequences these wrongs are bound to have on the fate of the nation. In fact, the word "awe" features instead of "fear" in line 152 in two variants of the poem.[9]

While propaganda is designed to induce collective panic, this other kind of fear works first and foremost at the level of the individual, and is a catalyst to reflection. The reader should feel this fear when contemplating the nation's wrongs: slavery, war-mongering and greed. But he also urges us to reflect on the erosion of sympathy in us as individuals, when being caught up in collective negative sentiment and remaining "ignorant" of the "ghastlier workings" of war (91-2). For Coleridge, after all, war never truly happens at a distance; even in his solitary dell war finds a way to intrude on his psyche, showing that a distant war fought by others can come back to haunt the individual in his most intimate moments of creative contemplation. We cannot expect all change from a change of power, he writes: the government is not a "robe | On which our vice and wretchedness were tagg'd | Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe | Pull'd off at pleasure" (164-7). He is urging his countrymen to take stock and look at what they had become, warning that "never can true courage dwell with them | Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look | At their own vices" (158-60). While loyalist publications were designed to appeal to the public's instinc-

9 There are two MS and seven full printed texts of the poem. Lines 130-98 were reprinted with omissions and slight revisions in the *Morning Post* and in the *Friend* (see Coleridge 2001a, 469). For an explanation of the different versions of the text see Coleridge 2001b, 594-5.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

tive emotional response, for Coleridge fear becomes an intellectual and artistic subject matter, treated with criticism and reflection, rather than remaining an overwhelming emotion. Aiming to resist an alarmist perpetuation of panic, Coleridge instead presents fear as a productive feeling that forces the reader to evaluate the ethical dimensions of late-eighteenth century British politics, and also, the individual's own private contribution to it.

Bibliography

An Authentic Account [1842] 1997 = *An Authentic Account of the Invasion by the French Troops, (Under the Command of General Tate) on Carrig Gwasted Point, Near Fishguard, on Wednesday, the 22nd Day of February, 1797, and Their Surrender to the Forces of His Britannic Majesty, on Goodwick Sands, on Friday, the 24th of February, Likewise, Some Occurrences Connected Therewith. Never before Published* [1842] (1997). Haverfordwest: Joseph Potter; Pembrokeshire County Council Cultural Services County Library.

Ashton, Rosemary (1996). *The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Critical Biography*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Baker, J. (1797). *A Brief Narrative of the French Invasion, Near Fishguard Bay*. Worcester: J. Tymbs.

Broadley, A.M. (1911). *Napoleon in Caricature 1795-1832*. 2 vols. London; New York: John Lane.

Bullen, Mark (1997). *Milford Marathon: The Story of the Customs Officers who Helped to Repel the French Invasion of Pembrokeshire in 1797*. London: H.M. Customs and Excise.

Carradice, Phil (1992). *The Last Invasion: The Story of the French Landing in Wales*. Pontypool: Village Publishing.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1797). "Review of Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*". *Critical Review*, 19, February, 194-200.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1956-71). *The Collected Letters*. 6 vols. Edited by Earl Leslie Griggs. Oxford: Clarendon. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1093/oseo/instance.00068664`.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1970). "The Watchman". *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, vol. 2. Edited by Lewis Patton. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (2001a). *Poetical Works*. Edited by J.C.C. Mays, 6 vols, vol. 16, I.1 (Reading Text) of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (2001b). *Poetical Works*. Edited by J.C.C. Mays, 6 vols, vol. 16, II.1 (Variorum Text) of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1978). *Essays on His Times*, vol. 1. Edited by David V. Erdman. *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 16 vols, vol. 3. London; Princeton: Routledge and Kegan Paul; Princeton University Press.

Ellul, Jacques [1965] (1973). *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. Transl. by Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner. New York: Vintage.

Favret, Mary (1994). "Coming Home". *Studies in Romanticism*, 33(4), 539-48. DOI `https://doi.org/10.2307/25601084`.

Favret, Mary (2009). *War at a Distance*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press.

Franklin, Alexandra; Philp, Mark (eds) (2003). *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

Frend, William [1793] (1995). "The Effect of War on the Poor". Claeys, Gregory (ed.), *Political Writings of the 1790s*, vol. 4. London: Pickering & Chatto, 126-7.

Gerrald, Joseph. [1793] (1995). "A Convention the Only Means of Saving Us from Ruin, in a Letter, Addressed to the People of England". Claeys, Gregory (ed.), *Political Writings of the 1790s*, vol. 4. London: Pickering & Chatto, 161-211.

Glover, Richard (1973). *Britain at Bay: Defence Against Bonaparte 1803-1814*. London; New York: Allen & Unwin; Barnes and Noble.

Hazlitt, William (1930-34). "My First Acquaintance with Poets". Howe, P.P. (ed.), *Complete Works*, vol. 17. London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 106-22.

Horn, Pamela (1980). *The Last Invasion of Britain, Fishguard 1797*. Fishguard: Preseli Printers.

Jones, Commander E.H. Stuart (1950). *The Last Invasion of Britain*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Jones, Mark (2003). "Alarmism, Public-Sphere Performatives, and the Lyric Turn: or, What is *Fears in Solitude* Afraid of?". *Boundary*, 2, 30(3), 67-105. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-30-3-67`.

Le Mesurier, Havilland (1798). *Thoughts on a French Invasion, with Reference to the Probability of Its Success and the Proper Means of Resisting It*. 3rd ed. London: J. Wright.

Longate, Norman (2001). *Island Fortress: The Defence of Great Britain 1603-1945*. London: Pimlico.

Magnuson, Paul (1989). "The Shaping of *Fears in Solitude*". Gallant, Christine (ed.), *Coleridge's Theory of Imagination Today*. New York: AMS Press, 197-210.

Magnuson, Paul (1998). *Reading Public Romanticism*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press.

Philp, Mark (ed.) (2006). *Resisting Napoleon: The British Response to the Threat of Invasion, 1797-1815*. Aldershot: Ashgate. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315244372`.

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

Rawlinson, Mark (2000). “Invasion! Coleridge, the Defence of Britain and the Cultivation of the Public’s Fear”. Shaw, Philip (ed.), *Romantic Wars: Studies in Culture and Conflict, 1793-1822*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 110-37. DOI `https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315243900-6`.

Roe, Nicholas (1986). “Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the French Invasion Scare”. *Wordsworth Circle*, 17(3), 142-8. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1086/twc24040728`.

Roe, Nicholas (1988). *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years*. Oxford: Clarendon. DOI `https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198119692.001.0001`.

Saunders, Andrew (1989). *Fortress Britain: Artillery Fortification on the British Isles and Ireland*. Liphook: Beaufort Publishing.

Scarry, Elaine (1985). *The Body in Pain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Semmel, Stuart (2004). *Napoleon and the British*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

The Fishguard Invasion 1892 = *The Fishguard Invasion by the French in 1797. Some Passages Taken from the Diary of the Late Reverend Daniel Rowlands* (1892). London: T. Fisher Unwin.

Walters, Syd (1993). *Syd Walters’ ‘Official’ Account, French Invasion, 1797*. Baltonsborough: Syd Walters.

Wheeler, H.F.B.; Broadley, A.M. [1908] (2007). *Napoleon and the Invasion of England: The Story of the Great Terror*. Chalford: Nonsuch Publishing.

Wu, Tim (2016). *The Attention Merchants*. London: Atlantic Books.

Material from the Curzon Collection

“An Invasion Sketch” (1803). London: Luke Hansard for John Hatchard and James Asperne. Curzon b.10(66).

“A View of the French Raft, as Seen Afloat at St. Maloes, in February 1798” (1798). London: John Fairburn, 13 February 1798. Curzon b.22(40).

Broadley, A.M.; Daniell, Water V. (n.d.). *Collectanea Napoleonica, Being a Catalogue of the Collection of Autographs, Historical Documents, Broadsides, Caricatures, Drawings, Maps, Music, Portraits, Naval and Military Costume-Plates, Battle Scenes, Views, etc. Relating to Napoleon I. and His Times, 1769-1821*. London: W.V. Daniell. Curzon d.25.

“Countrymen, The whole Plot’s Discover’d!!” (1803). Printed by W. Burton for J. Asperne. Curzon b.10(75).

Cruikshank, Isaac (1796). “The Budget or John Bull Frightened Out of His [Money] Wits”. London: S.W. Fores. Curzon b.3(66).

Fitzgerald, W.T. (1803). “Britons Never Will be Slaves: An Address to Every Loyal Briton on the Threatened Invasion of His Country”. J. Gold for J. Asperne. Curzon b.10(106).

“Freedom or Slavery: A New Song” (1803). London: J. Crowder; E. Hemsted. Curzon b.10(105).

“Horrors Upon Horrors” (1803). London: W. Marchant. Curzon b.10(46).

e-ISSN 2420-823X
ISSN 2385-1635

"More Rafts -- or, : A New Plan for Invading England. A Present of Eight Swans from the Mayor of Amiens" (1803). London: Laurie & Whittle. Curzon b.23(190).

"The Fate of Labouring Men, and the Poor, in Case of Invasion" (1803). London: H. Bryer. Curzon b.10(71).

"The Grand Republican Balloon, Intended to Convey the Army of England from the Gallic Shore" (1798). London: J. Wallis. Curzon b.11(40).

Watson, Richard (1798). "The Bishop of Llandaff's Thoughts on the French Invasion, Originally Addressed to the Clergy of his Diocese". *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Llandaff in June, 1798, by R. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff*. James Asperne. Curzon b.10(8).

Rivista annuale
Annual Journal
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

1868 2018 150 Università Ca'Foscari Venezia

ISSN 2385-1635
9 772385 163007